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# SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

*By the same Author.*

THE PERFECTION OF MAN BY CHARITY.

A SPIRITUAL RETREAT.

A GOOD PRACTICAL CATHOLIC. With Prefatory Letter by H. E. CARDINAL VAUGHAN.

A FEW AIDS TO FAITH.

A FEW FIRST PRINCIPLES OF RELIGIOUS LIFE.

HOLY MATRIMONY AND SINGLE BLESSEDNESS.

SPIRITUAL PERFECTION THROUGH CHARITY. [*In preparation.*

# SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS

BY

FR. H. REGINALD BUCKLER, O.P.

*Cogitavi vias meas; et converti pedes meos in testimonia tua.*
Ps. cxviii. 59.

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PRINTERS TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE | PUBLISHERS OF BENZIGER'S MAGAZINE
1911

48348

**Nihil Obstat.**

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**Imprimi potest.**

F. W. LINAHAN, O.P.,
*Vic. Prov.*

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✠ JOHN M. FARLEY,
*Archbishop of New York.*

NEW YORK, November 22, 1910.

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# Spiritual Considerations

## I

### The Parable of the Sower

EVERY time we hear the parable of the sower, it seems to strike our souls with a force and impressiveness quite its own. The illustration from nature is so perfectly clear: Our Lord Himself carefully explains His meaning; and thus its application to our souls is quite unmistakable.

We all know what it is to sow seeds. Each seed is the germ of a living plant: and our instinct is to *value* them for the sake of our future benefit and profit, knowing that if they are wasted, or devoured, or trodden under foot, or not used at proper time, the fruits will be lost beyond recovery.

It is further clear to us that the seeds depend entirely for their future development upon the ground into which they fall. Some fall by the wayside; others upon shallow, barren ground; some among thorns; others

finally on good ground. Let us observe at once that three out of these four kinds of ground prove to be ill-disposed for the life of the seed. Only the good ground supplies the requirements for its growth.

We know that our divine Master is here teaching us the things of grace by those of nature.

He tells us that the seed is the Word of God. O how often does God speak to our souls! How many a light does He send into the minds of men! To some, not yet having it, He gives, or maybe He offers, the light of faith. It is the offering of a gift. For "every best and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights."[1] This light, speaking His truth, His word, His will to a soul, may come but once, or it may come again and again, for God is Master of His gifts. But a grace once lost never returns, any more than time lost returns. God may give new graces, or He may not. One light leads to another, and grace follows grace. But if a soul reject light and grace, who shall say what the results may be? It is easy to reject others also. And "the repetition of irregularities produces habits, and thus the inner constitution

[1] James i. 17.

is spoiled, and the upright become corrupt."[1] The Psalmist gives the rule in the way of grace, *To-day, if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts.*

To those already possessing the gift of faith God speaks in countless ways. First, by the inspired word, as He speaks to us now in the parable of the sower. And every text of Holy Writ is truly the divine voice to our souls. Only it behooves us to remember that God being so great and man so little, we are frequently unable to penetrate to the truths underlying the inspired words. For God's ways are not our ways, nor our thoughts His thoughts. Hence it has been well said that Scripture is not a science of the *mind,* but of the *heart,* and is unintelligible save to those whose heart is right.[2]

As here below "we walk by faith and not by sight," God does not show Himself. "Verily, Thou art a hidden God."[3] Yet He speaks to us clearly both His truth and His will—His truth through the creeds and the living voice of the Church and His will through the commandments. Moreover, the light of reason is a divine light in the mind, and its dictates are the voice of God to the

[1]Butler's Anal. p. 1, c. 5. [2]Pascal.
[3]Is. xlv. 15.

soul. Further, the laws of our state of life bespeak the will of God to be done. The voice of superiors represents the divine presence and authority to us. Finally, to consecrated souls who offer the holocaust and strive in earnest to be all for God, the divine Lover Himself comes. As Our Lord says, "We will come to him and make our abode with him; and I will manifest myself to him."[1] "Many a visit doth He make to the internal man: sweet is His communication with him, delightful His consolation, and a familiarity exceedingly to be admired."[2] "Send forth Thy light and Thy truth."[3] How often does God give the dartings of His light and the touches of His love to those who are all for Him! *I am the Lord thy God, that teach thee profitable things, that govern thee in the way thou walkest.*[4] *Hearken to My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people, and walk ye in all the way I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.*[5] *Follow the Lord your God, and hear His voice. Him shall you serve, and to Him shall you cleave.*[6]

As in all these various ways, throughout the course of our lives, God deals with us by

[1]John xiv. 23. [2]Imit. ii. 1. [3]Ps. xlii. 3.
[4]Is. xlviii. 17. [5]Jer. vii. 23. [6]Deut. xiii. 4.

the manifold givings of His grace, light, and love, all bespeaking His word to our souls, so we have to consider in what disposition our souls may be as to receiving and responding to His divine communications. And here the divine Teacher Himself instructs us by likening the different conditions of men's souls to the different kinds of ground named in the parable upon which the good seed falls.

First, the seed falls by the wayside. Oh, how this strikes home to thousands and millions of us! How often has the divine Word fallen on you externally and not penetrated internally! Who could count up those souls nowadays to whom God has spoken the truth of His Church, yet—how was it? The Word fell upon them—*to-day if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts.* But the costs were too great. They would not be persuaded. They would not understand. They did not *will* to believe.

*The lack of desire is the ill of all ills.*

Faith is of the will, as well as of the intellect, and above all it is of the grace of God. It is a gift. "By grace you are saved, through faith: and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God."[1] The gift was offered but it was not taken. It was like the

[1]Eph. ii. 8.

seed upon the surface that did not sink in. Thus it was carried off, or trodden under foot; or even, awful to consider, yet the Master says it, "the devil cometh, and taketh the Word out of their heart, lest believing, they should be saved." "If thou hadst but known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace: but now they are hidden from thy eyes."[1] A grace once lost never returns. They may drown their thoughts and their conscience in the whirl of natural activity. But not to go forward in the way of God is to go back; and not to improve is to deteriorate. To reject the light is to extinguish the spirit.[2] Probably such souls become more and more embittered against the true Faith. Such is to be expected when the human spirit prevails against the divine. Or maybe their interior is in that state of bitter contradiction of which St. Bernard speaks when the intellect shows the right thing and the will refuses to do it.[3] It is clear that the whole of this line of thought applies in equal measure to things of grace and spirituality as it does to those of faith.

[1]Luke xix. 42.

[2]Extinguish not the spirit. 1 Thess. v. 19.

[3]Utinam hac ut intellectum admonent, moveant et affectum, ne sit intus amarissima contradictio, et divisio molestissima. Serm. 5 in Ascens.

How many children of the Church and of religion will have to consider carefully here?

*Consideration like an angel came.*

Look now into your lives and into your hearts, and consider how many precious lights and helps and drawings to divine things are vouchsafed to you. Do you reflect that the Word of God, the grace of God, the light of God, the love of God, fall upon your soul? Yes, fall upon you. But the seed falls on the wayside, too. Light, grace, and love are given to you ten times, twenty, fifty. Months and years roll by, and graces come in rills and cataracts. There is no question about the coming of grace. Does not Our Lord Himself come to us at every Mass? Does He not forgive in every absolution? Does He not speak His Word in every verse of the Divine Office? Many a time you open the New Testament, the "Imitation," and spiritual books. Oh, what lights then fall upon the soul! But do not miss the mark! It is not the falling of the seed, but the *sinking in* that has so specially to be attended to. How often have we listened to the best principles of Christian, Catholic, religious, and spiritual life. But somehow they come and go. We see them and we approve of them. But do they become realities

within our souls? Even the old heathen poet has said:

*Video meliora, proboque; deteriora sequor.*

What a difference there is between the abstract and the concrete, between theories and facts, between the words of wisdom and the works. How is it? The mind sees, but the heart wanders. *Semper hi errant corde.* While these souls approve and applaud the best things, they do not really and effectually love them and will them. They do not go to mental prayer with anything like the relish they go to sporting, smoking, or novel reading! *Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.* They even sometimes feel a disinclination to assist at or to serve an extra Mass, although the Mass means our dear Lord coming directly to us. They feel an irksomeness at the Divine Office and a readiness to shirk it, although they are the very trumpets of the Church sending up her praises and prayers from earth to heaven. And in times of special grace, such as retreats and spiritual conferences, as well as in the ordinary daily reading of holy books, the words of God so divinely communicated to them are listened to attentively and approvingly, and yet the heart and will and affections not really opening to them, they

are practically neglected and lost, and must be compared to the seeds falling on the wayside. And maybe even the precious seeds of grace are trodden under foot or devoured by the malice of evil spirits. How sad not to be as wise in the things of grace as we are in those of nature!

Other seeds there are that fall on barren ground. They sink in to some extent, and to some small degree they grow, the blade appears, and they spread and expand a little. But the quality of the ground is so poor and the nourishment they receive so small that their development is clean hindered, and so weakly are the young growths that when the winds and storms arise they are blown down and wither away, and this "because they had no roots." They had a fair look in their little way, but no real root or strength. How many souls are thus shown forth! Those who give more attention to the Word of God, the grace of God, the love and will of God, and the things of God, than those likened to the wayside; for spiritual things grow to some extent within them. The truths of faith take a certain hold of their minds if they are yet outside the fold—grow and expand within them to some extent, but impediments abound: the way of the Lord is

not yet made straight within them. "Subjectivism in religion" is a good deal too much there. Humility and the childlike disposition toward the Church are yet wanting. Intellectual activity is too strong. Nor are they sufficiently trained to confidence in God and diffidence in themselves. Affairs of the heart, too, are so often *impeditiva*. God acts by law. Faith is a gift and a grace. If man *will* keep impediments to faith within him, it is his own lookout. The gift is not given till the hindrances are removed. Preparations to faith by intellectual convictions may be there. But faith itself is an infused virtue, a "perfect gift, coming down from the Father of lights."[1] And it is not given till the soul is fit, prepared, and disposed to receive it by a quiet, humble, childlike, and receptive mind.

The like considerations are also applicable to the things of grace in the spiritual life of the children of the Church. Religious men and women and priests and those aspiring to spirituality again and again hear, read, and learn the principles of holiness and spiritual progress. They are taught that union with God by perfect charity is the end of life; that the vows, rules, and respective virtues and

[1]James i. 17.

works of their state are the ways and means thereto, and therefore have to be faithfully carried out, in view to daily advancement to this end. Prayer and mortification are shown to be the lifelong accompaniments to charity; and as souls progress daily in their life of love, they have also to progress day by day in prayer and mortification. Moreover, the inner life of love has to work in all our ordinary actions, lest we be theoretical and not practical; lest we have the words of wisdom without the works. How often are these truths, and so many others connected with them, impressed upon us! They are taken in at the time and pondered upon afterward, yet somehow they do not grow to any extent within the spiritual ground of the soul; they are not really assimilated with mind and heart—not carefully kept and consistently acted upon. Care is needed, will power is wanted, to train and discipline the soul to the work. But so it is; nature is strong and grace is weak. Old habits are with difficulty unformed: and by constant indulgence they become second nature, and thoughts, desires, and affections follow accordingly. Thus souls easily incline to their natural propensities, and quickly develop "perverse habitudes," and stronger tempta-

tions arising, and the higher habit and principle of virtue not being yet in possession, or "having no roots," is soon overcome, blown down and withers away. How many are thus found who begin a spiritual course; but their progress is desultory. Somehow they do not make it their "one project." And so they are quickly "drawn away and allured."[1] If they think of divine things sometimes, they think of creatures and natural pleasures habitually. They are not "all for God." They are not wholly, constantly, consistently devoted to His love and service. Thus they "last for a while, and in time of temptation they fall away."

But the good seed is now found falling among thorns. It sinks into the earth and grows in its own hidden way, and spreads and rises upward, and might have thriven had not its growth been thwarted and utterly choked by the thorns. Our Lord distinctly tells us what all this means. The thorny ground bespeaks that large class of souls whose higher life and aspirations are stifled by the allurements of the world. These are "they who, having heard, go their way, and are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit."

[1] James i. 14.

"Having heard, they go their way." How descriptive of poor human nature going its own way, heedless of divine grace! How abundantly the Word of God has been heard, and the truths of faith declared! *In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum.* But having heard, they go their way—they go their own way—they do not follow the ways of God's light and grace. They do not calmly and consistently yield themselves to the light that is offered them. Or maybe they have the light to see but not the courage to do. Would that all who look toward the true Faith would remember the word of the great soul who said "I will not blink the question."[1] The costs indeed of a conversion are often immense, and at times appalling. But the law is there. "Who is like to God"? Many have done it, and have given up all for God. "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul"? Yet it must be feared that countless are the numbers of those whose affections and attachments to the things of this life so blear their mental vision, and so engage their desires and hearts, that the gift of faith offered them, the Word of God, and the good seed, sinking in to some degree, and rising upwards

[1]Newman. Lett. Sept. 22, 1839.

in their lives for a while, is before long stunted, blasted, suffocated, and, as Our Lord says, "choked with the cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life," and thus "yields no fruit." And in like manner looking to those of the household of Faith, and of religion, too, and others chosen by God for His love and service, those in training for Him, and those in priestly life—whether we consider past times or present—how many lights and graces they have had—the Word of God strikes in upon them forcibly again and again—they see the better things, they know the better ways—they have learnt much, they have thought much, they have had repeated presentments of the best ideals of life—they read Our Lord's words in the Gospel day by day, they use good spiritual books, they study the science of the Church, they go daily to Our Lord in the Mass, and habitually to the sacraments, nor do they live in worldly surroundings, but rather in religious atmosphere. Yet, how is it? After all, *locus non facit sanctos.* Is it not often too true, that after hearing the best things they "go their way"—go their own way, not God's way? If they are not caught by riches, they are caught by pleasure, self-gratification, and indolence. These easily

run away with our time, thoughts, and affections; and multiplied acts soon pass into formed habits. These are cases of nature *versus* grace. Which will gain the ascendency? Life goes on, and souls are found gaining and losing. What care they ought to have! The soul is the kingdom of God, and God seeks to gain it. He claims it as His own, and all this light, love, and grace that He gives, is to get it for Himself. Yet souls *will* go their own way. And the lower things choke the higher. Human nature is weak. Indulge a propensity and you strengthen it. Indulge the higher love of God and divine things, and it will strengthen. Indulge the lower love of fleshly and selfish pleasures, and they strengthen. And the higher languish for want of use, and the lower strengthen from exercise. What is all this but the good seed choked by the thorns? But God be praised—let us come to the good ground—the only ground that brings forth the fruit.

How many we have seen and known who when the living Word has spoken the true Faith to their souls, have taken it in, with "a good and perfect heart," loving it better than dear friends, and all worldly advantages and prospects, letting everything go for the sake

of the pearl of great price! What less can be done, if a soul prefer the Creator to the creature, and knows that it is bound to be loyal to its highest convictions? Love is preference: and the love of God must have no second place in the heart of man. And so it is through all our spiritual life, if we are to be the real thing. All earnest souls have constantly to be opening their eyes to the best principles. The inspired Word in every page bespeaks them to us. Our Lord's own words, the words of the apostles, of the Holy Fathers, doctors, and saints; the breathings of the Holy Spirit in such books as the "Imitation," and the many spiritual treatises that bring the Word of God and the science of the saints into our souls, all these fall as the good seed into the good ground. These are they who "in a good and perfect heart hearing the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience." Here is the difference between the good ground and all the rest. The good ground keeps the good seed, and has all the qualities enabling the seed to grow to its perfection through all its stages, expanding and developing to the perfect plant and tree, yielding its fruits in all sweetness and abundance. And these are the souls who, hearing, and knowing, and con-

sidering with willing minds and loving hearts the divine words bespeaking God's will, and love, and service, take them in with full response and relish, loving them as they love nothing else on earth, and with Mary pondering them in their hearts, and all this to be "doers of the Word, and not hearers only":[1] for "hearing the Word they keep it." O how clear is the difference between those who hear and know, yea, and teach the Word, and those who *do* it! How many there are who, as the old heathen poet says, see the better things, and approve them, and yet do the worse! "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."[2] "If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them."[3] "Blessed are they who hear the Word of God, and keep it."[4] And not only keep it, but keep it with "a good and perfect heart." It is the heart, and the perfect heart, that God seeks and desires more than all. And this best of all loves, God's own love, engaging the heart, spurs the soul on to all the works of life; and thus, like the good ground, the perfect heart yields its fruits, and the perfect lover of God moves onwards and upwards by constant aspirations to union with

[1]James i. 22. [2]Rom. ii. 13. [3]John xiii. 17. [4]Luke xi. 28.

Him, in the life of mutual love, its love working in a thousand different ways, bringing forth the virtues of Christian religious life, thirty-fold, sixty-fold, and a hundred-fold. And this life of love and union in the perfect heart and the perfect lover, attained gradually by corresponding *acts* of love, accompanied with prayer and mortification, which purify the heart of all foreign loves and attachments, little by little, by means of great fidelity, earnestness, and unreservedness, and by means of the *holocaust* which makes a soul "all for God," brings it in due time to the *habitual* union with Him. And this is ever considered to be the *end* of life, both active and contemplative here below—the habitual union of the soul with God, in all its powers. Thus, the memory is united with Him by ever remembering His presence, love, and working, in nature, grace, and glory. The intellect is united with Him, in knowing Him more and more: and the will, in loving Him more and more: and all the other powers, senses, and members, in serving Him (each one in his own state and office) and all according to His love, will, and movement, God and the soul ever living, loving, and working in mutual union together. "All these things one and the same

Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as He will."[1]

Let us never forget the teachings of the Divine Master in the parable of the sower. It is a compendium of all we want. Let us ponder its parallels between nature and grace. Let us return to it again and again, measuring ourselves severely, and testing our dispositions by the different kinds of ground into which the seed falls. Nothing short of the good ground will do. See how well the gardener cultivates it. And we must cultivate our souls—and keep up the work through life. Our Lord is always ready to give us of His best. But the law is there. The dispositions of the ground are everything for the seed—and the dispositions of our souls are everything for the grace of God, and its workings within us. It has been well said, and let us say it here, and often repeat it—"God is ever ready; the question is, are *we* ready?"

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 11.

## II

## Earnestness in Spiritual Life

WHY should we not be as earnest in spiritual things as the children of the world are in all their daily undertakings? Truly they serve as so many object-lessons to us. From early years they show keen interest, energy, and devotion in acquiring the knowledge of language, music, painting, geography, and the rest. It is the same in sports, games, and travels. They give themselves, too, with great relish to the society of kind friends and worldly folk. And later on they embark in the business of life, and their time, thoughts, and affections are fully engaged in the pursuits of their worldly occupations.

Why we can not and do not give ourselves to the highest, best, and most soul-satisfying of all works, with something of the like enthusiasm, seeing that nothing is greater, better, more ennobling and enjoying than progress in divine knowledge and love, and union with God, this is indeed a question to which the only answer seems to be that nature and

not grace is in the ascendency within us. Thus it is that life and time go by. Nature strengthens with exercise, and grace wanes from disuse. A great soul has told us that "the first disposition toward finding the Truth is to be in earnest in seeking it."[1] How true it is! So many who are outside the fold think about religious truths, and feel the claims of the Church on their allegiance, but their old associations and habits, their friends, and position in the world, the consequences of the step, the losses inevitably following, the pain of the wrench, all conspire together to turn their thoughts away from the simple question of Truth, and keep them where they are. Thus, for want of earnestness in seeking, they find not the priceless treasure of faith. So it is in the things of grace and spirituality. Many think, read, and speak about them from time to time; they approve and applaud them in others; they desire them in an abstract sort of way, or, as theology would say, *in sensu diviso;* but they are not prepared for the whole work. As Our Lord says in the Gospel, they begin the tower, without considering the cost of finishing it. Or they desire the goodly pearl without giving all to gain it. Thus

[1] Newman.

their desires are inefficacious. Nor do they proceed from desire to determination. Nor do they make the work of perfection the one great project of life. Hence it clearly follows that their means are not in proportion to the end. All this shows the want of earnestness in the work. They have neither the wisdom nor the will in their spiritual work that the children of the world have in the commonest business of life. Worldly folk go straight to their aim, as the archer goes straight to the target. They know their purpose, and they make directly for it. If the work be arduous, they are not found to be either weak-minded or indolent. Desires of success and gain quickly spur them on. Will-power makes them at once determined and courageous. Where would all our builders, farmers, soldiers, lawyers, nurses, railway men be without these conditions?

Why are not the like conditions forthcoming in the greatest of all undertakings, that of getting to union with God by the life of perfect charity? Many causes are answerable for such effects. The root-cause will be want of practical faith. Many souls believe the truths of faith, without living up to their belief, being "drawn away and allured" by the pleasures of the senses. Thus

their natural man masters them. They engage themselves with what they see, and hear, and feel, and have not the courage to resist and mortify their natural liking for pleasure. This is not living up practically to their faith. Faith teaches them much more than all this. They do not seem to have learnt how to rise from nature up to Nature's God. Faith is belief in God, the Creator of all things visible and invisible. Its first dictate is to rise from the creature to the Creator. Is it not natural and easy to do this? We enjoy the hills, and vales, and trees, and fields, and running waters, and flowers, and fruits, and the glowing sun, and the blue sky, and the bright air, and dear friends, and the use of all our faculties, senses, and members. Alas! Why are we smothered up in all these things, and intoxicated with the pleasure which they bring, and led off and away from the dear Source of them all, instead of leaving them frequently and readily, wisely and willingly, rising upwards from effect to cause; seeing that they are not of themselves good, but little emanations of God's goodness, and that they all call out to us with ten thousand tongues, to rise to Him who made them, to love Him, choose Him, prefer Him to all, give ourselves to Him, and

set ourselves straightly in order to our end of uniting with Him by perfect love here and hereafter? If we "know these things, we shall be blessed if we do them."[1] Why are we hearers, and not doers of the Word?[2] We ought to "walk by faith, and not by sight."[3] Yet how many do the reverse. They walk by sight, not by faith. They engage themselves all day long with the pleasures of sense and self-will. They go from one thing to another. Propensities indulged soon strengthen into settled habits. Their taste is for the things they see and feel. Love of silence, meditation, and detachment have little or no place in their heart. How can they go on to spiritual things when they do not desire to go on? The want of desire to advance in the way of God is "the ill of all ills."

It is abundantly clear that such as these do not live up to their faith, do not act according to it, but act frequently against it. And acts make habits. Faith is a habit; and it may be strong or weak. If used, it strengthens; if neglected, it weakens. We ought to walk by faith, constantly and habitually: and it leads us on *de virtute in virtutem*. If we do not live on the higher

[1] John xiii. 17. [2] James i. 22. [3] 2 Cor. v. 7.

plane, we live on the lower. If we do not walk the higher way of faith, we walk the lower way of sight, feeling, and natural activity. It is but saying in other words that we live according to nature, not according to grace; according to man, not according to God. St. Paul, as we know, is very uncompromising about this. He tells us to put off the old man, and put on the new man. He says that if we live according to the flesh, we shall die: but that if by the Spirit we mortify the deeds of the flesh, we shall live.[1] All this implies the life of faith. The wisdom of the world does not teach it. It is the life of the Spirit, not of the flesh. We have grace, and the Spirit of God within us, in order that we may live by them, and walk according to them. "If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit."[2] "Mind the things that are above, not the things that are below."[3] All this is the life of faith. For want of it the natural man goes apace. And how in such condition will the spiritual man keep up an earnest progress? Let us not blink the question.

A second explanation of so much heedlessness in spiritual life and work may be found in the solemn words of St. Augustine, *Nemo*

[1]Rom. viii. 13. [2]Gal. v. 25. [3]Col. iii. 2.

*venit nisi tractus.*[1] Such souls admit that they have no special drawing to spirituality. And indeed Our Lord's words are very direct: "No man can come to Me except the Father draw him."[2] We have the law both in nature and in grace, *Deus est agens principale.* As God is the Author and Finisher of our faith, so also He begins, continues, and finishes the work of our perfection. He is ever the First Cause, we, secondary causes, working under Him and with Him. He is the Alpha and Omega: He the Creator, and we His creatures; and to be a creature is to be nothing before the Creator. "None is good but God alone."[3] We are not good, but the recipients of His goodness. Thus Our Lord says, "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you."[4]

All this is elementary Christianity. Therefore God chooses a soul, draws it onwards to Himself, and works with the soul itself, little by little, the work of its perfection. But some one will say, "I am not drawn." Ah, no—all are drawn, in different ways and degrees. It is a matter of following up consistently and co-operating with God's lights and graces from the first.

[1] Tract. 26 in Joan.
[2] Joan. vi. 44.
[3] Luke xviii. 19.
[4] John xv. 16.

"God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel."[1] Therefore if a soul turn from its first light and grace, it soon turns from others in succession, and from repetition of act, habits gradually form, and every one "turns aside into his own way." Thus it is that man himself interferes with the drawings of the good spirit, and then complains that he is not drawn. Another says, "But if we are drawn, we go unwillingly." "Think not," says St. Augustine, "that you are drawn unwillingly; for a soul is drawn by love. Neither ask how you go voluntarily if you are drawn: you are drawn even by pleasure." So it is in nature, so it is in grace. "Thus man is drawn to Christ, by the pleasure of truth, the pleasure of happiness, the pleasure of justice, the pleasure of future life. *Da amantem, et sentit quod dico.*"[2] Numberless are the attractions which a soul finds to divine things, that gives itself in the ordinary way to prayer—assistance at Mass, the sacraments, and daily meditation. The kingdom of God is within us; and God never gives up His immediate jurisdiction over the souls of men. But there it is—the light and the grace come—a word, a text, a thought,

[1]Ecclus. xv. 14. [2]St. Aug. Tract. 26 in Joan.

a principle strikes the mind—Will the soul dwell upon it calmly and sweetly? Will it take it directly to itself? Will it let the impression sink in? Will the heart work with the mind? So often the heart follows not the light of the mind. *Dixi, semper hi errant corde.* The heart *will* go wandering after its trifling affections. And God's grace wants the combined action of heart with mind. It is strange that the most potent principles that strike straight to the clearest laws at once of nature and grace, and if but taken up and acted upon consistently, would be the reformation of a soul, are yet allowed somehow to come and go. They flutter in the mind, when read or listened to, for a few moments, like fifty other unimportant things of detail might. Then they go forever. The soul felt them, but was not drawn. The light came, and went. Is it not all a want of earnestness in spiritual work? Let us take as an instance the principle of principles, in nature and grace: *Ante omnia considerandus est finis; et secundum finem dirigendus est cursus.* O vastly momentous and eternal truth! If but grasped, and loved, and earnestly taken up, and acted upon, it brings a soul *recta via ad Deum.* Before all other concerns of life, I must look at the

main *end* of life. I must be as wise in grace as I am in nature. This end is union with God by means of perfect love; love being the bond of union in grace and glory, as it is in nature. This being my end, I have to direct the whole course of my life hereto. Am I prepared for this? If not, why not? The principle stands. It is indubitable, indisputable, unalterable. Take it up, and it will reform your soul. Viewing the end clearly, you will at once see what your means are to be. To get to the union of perfect love, you will have to think of God, look to Him, choose Him, give yourself to Him, and work at once from love to Him, in view of forming love's habit within you. All this means mental prayer. Therefore this is a primary means to the end. Further, to be attached to the Divine All you will have to be detached from your little all. And this is mortification—another primary means to the end. Therefore, to accomplish the work you must be a man of the love of God above all things, a man of prayer, and a man of mortification. Are you bent upon all this—that is, are you bent on going the way to the end? What sort of head and heart will you have if you adopt the great principle in the common business of life, because you

know life would be a failure if you did otherwise, and yet you adopt it not in the work of all works, that of attaining the ultimate end of all life here below, although you know that if you neglect it your everlasting life and happiness will go? *We have eyes, and see not.* And exactly the same line of thought may be applied to those so many who hear so often the Word of God, who read so many holy and helpful books, and yet somehow they become not *doers* of the word. All these holy readings are lights, graces, and drawings of the good Spirit. But souls yield not themselves to the effluence of the divine light and love. They are not loving and courageous souls, as all have to be if the work is to be done. For instance, Our Lord's words in the Gospel, "If any man love Me, My Father will love him: and we will come to him, and make our abode with him; and I will manifest Myself to him."[1] Is not this light, grace, and drawing to the soul? But how many hear it again and again, yet give themselves not to the real work of it? They do not delight themselves with its inmost meaning. They do not put themselves into sweet relation with our blessed Lord. The divine words remain in

[1]John xiv. 23, 21.

the letter; they do not pass into real fact within our souls. Our Lord will not constrain any one against his will, because He wants the homage of the heart. What we do for Him must be voluntarily done and lovingly done. Thus, if the heart is not given to God, Our Lord's drawing will not be efficacious, because He draws by love. Go to Him, choose Him, love Him, and declare your love by keeping His word; for so He says: "If any man love Me, he will keep My word."[1] "Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it."[2] How many there are who hear divine and spiritual things, believe them, talk of them, approve them, and yet *do* them not. "He that heareth My words and doth them is like to a man building on a rock. But he that heareth and doth not is like to a foolish man building on the sand."[3] All this again bespeaks the want of earnestness in spiritual life and work.

And so it is in countless texts of Holy Writ. They sound upon our souls. They speak the Word of God directly to us. But so far it is the mind only that is working. We think, listen, and consider. Do we *will* to go on? Is our heart in the work of our spiritual advancement? Our Lord draws us by

[1]John xiv. 23. [2]Luke xi. 28. [3]Matt. vii. 24, 26.

our love. If we love not we are not drawn. When, then, St. Paul says, "Walk in the spirit,"[1] do we *love* to walk according to the good Spirit and to mortify the deeds of the flesh? Is our heart in the work of our spiritual reformation and perfection? When he says, "Mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth,"[2] do we in right earnest give our thoughts and affections, and love to give them, to the things of God, to the great principles of spiritual life, to the presence of God in His wonderful works, to Our Lord's hidden sacramental presence, the glories of our blessed Lady, the angels and the saints, and all this by the real preference of the heart and the renunciation of perishable love? The Apostle bids us attend to the higher by renouncing the lower. Have we the work well in hand—seriously, earnestly in hand?

Then the ever-to-be-remembered chapter on charity—how that with all the grandest externals of life, without the right spirit within, we are as "a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal."[3] Oh, the power of this apostolic sentence! Again and again it strikes upon our ears. Does it sink within? Or is it as the good seed falling on the way-

[1]Gal. v. 16. [2]Col. iii. 2. [3]1 Cor. xiii. 1.

side, on the hard, rocky ground, or among the thorns? Alas! it ought to strike straight to the inmost core of our hearts and engage them at once for God alone, His love, His will, His service, and all our other loves should be set in subordination to Him. No other passage from the apostolic and patristic writings can compare with this, for declaring the all-sufficiency of divine charity as the inner life of the soul and the total insufficiency of all the rest apart from it. If we were in right earnest we should desire at once to commence the solid construction of our spiritual scheme upon the basis of this inspired teaching. It is a matter of will and heart working under grace and love. Or, briefly, God and man in the life of mutual love, this love gradually forming into an operative habit, governing all the works of life.

But nothing can be done without desire, determination, and practice. Is it not so in the common, ordinary round of things? People do not become artists, musicians, nurses, or actresses without desires and resolutions to do the things. It is futile to expect to do anything if we do not want to do it and if we do not resolve to do it. Why are people given so much to smoking and sport-

ing? Clearly because they desire and determine to do so. If they did not want the things they would not do them. This, therefore, may be considered as the finishing cause of the effects we are now considering —want of real desire and determination to use the means that will secure the end. The life of perfect love between God and the soul, formed into an habitual working habit, can never be accomplished without the assiduous practice of mental prayer and mortification. *Hoc est via, ambulate in ea.*[1] These are the necessary means to perfect love. Do we want to be men of prayer and men of mortification, and are we determined to be so? This will mean detachment from lesser things.

*It must be so. Plato, thou reasonest well.*

Both stand or fall together. Without well-developed mental prayer and inner mortification there is no perfect love. Therefore, if we want the one we must want the other. We must at once desire and resolve to seek our way to God by giving ourselves, and this with real heart (as though without heart we could go to God), to devoted mental prayer, in which we have to progress right well, and this combined with the mortifica-

[1] Is. xxx. 21.

tion of our self-love, by detaching the heart from lesser affections. And as the months and years go by, our prayer and mortification have to be well maintained. And as we advance in them we advance in love. And we must will to go on in all together, and desire to go on, and determine to go on, and *go on.*

Thus it is that we succeed in spiritual things exactly as we do in natural things. Nor can anything be done, great or small, in nature or grace, were it only turning the head, without desiring to do the thing, determining to do it, and doing it.

## III

## Impediments to Progress

ONCE in a dream two friends were speaking together on spiritual things, and one offered to read an extract which she knew would please the spiritual Father. He intently listening, she read as follows: "If you will progress in a spiritual way, you must leave your hold of a thousand tons."

The Father thought it very striking; but he saw at once it was putting an old truth in a new way: and after waking he remembered the saying, *non nova, sed novè.*

Truly, in the natural order there is no getting on with plain impediments to progress. Fancy trying to walk with huge weights chaining the feet! Or to see the way in darkness without a light! Or to ascend a mountain in a sick and weakly condition! No reasoning is needed in cases of sheer incompatibility. Intuition serves us all alike. It tells us at once that impossibilities are out of the question.

Parallels between nature and grace run very closely. A spiritual life means the

sweet and willing subjection of man's spirit to the spirit of God, by the inner life of mutual love between the soul and God, formed as a habit disposed to its acts. But man has a body of flesh about him, the allurements of the world pressing around him, evil spirits in league against him, and all this in conjunction with his own unreformed and active human spirit. Considering, too, the multiplied repetition of these workings formed into habits, that become the spring of constant action, breeding many "perverse habitudes," and we see at once what abounding impediments to spiritual life and progress are likely to be found seated and settled in the soul. The all-wise providence of God acts by law, as in nature, so in grace. And in the grant of God's best and perfect gifts the law is to have impediments removed before the grace is given. Divine faith is a gift. And we may wonder sometimes why some obtain it and others not. The explanation is simple. While earnest souls are determined to give all for the pearl of great price, following up their first, second, and succeeding lights till coming to perfect day, others seem not to wish to be persuaded—the costs are great, the wrench tremendous, the sacrifices vast. Alas! they have the light to

see, but not the courage to do. The intellect and will are thus at variance; and faith is of the will as well as of the mind. Thus the attachments of the heart hold back the spirit from following the divine light. Here are the impediments to faith. No man cometh to Our Lord except the Father draw him. But the soul is not drawn because it is held. To be held and to be drawn are incompatibilities. A soul is drawn by love; and here it loves the things that hold it—they draw it and keep it strongly tied. The soul can not be drawn on and held back together. Here we see impediments to the gift of faith.

Coming now to the work of a spiritual life, we know that it is all between God and the soul. God loves His creatures with an everlasting love. He knows that He alone is all their life, light, love, and happiness, and that the soul of man is the kingdom of God, and His "homeliest home" on earth. Thus it is in Him we "live, move, and have our being." How He delights to be with the children of men, and how He pursues our souls, surrounding us with His goods and gifts in nature, grace, and glory, and more than all giving us Himself! Set upon gaining us, He comes to our nature in His incarnation as the model and the perfect man, in all the stages

of our mortal life, that we may learn to live with Him and according to Him, then extends His presence by love's wondrous inventions, coming to us closer still, and one by one, in His sacrificial and sacramental life. our blessed Lady, all the angelic choirs, and the saints and spirits of the just made perfect are in union with us all; and we begin here the life of love with God and them that is to be continued forever hereafter. But as we look at them, one and all, they are wholly pure and perfect. The spirit of God governs them wholly and fully without the smallest impediment within them. What a delightful object-lesson is this, to see the divine life so radiant within them, to see them thus filled with divine light, love, and power, each according to his measure and merit, without the smallest or slightest impediment anywhere.

Then when we bring ourselves into their sweet association and look into our imperfect souls, and lives, and workings, alas! what awful impediments to God's reign and governance within us do we find! In the marvelous workings of nature God is supreme, "reaching from end to end mightily, and ordering all things sweetly,"[1] but not so in

[1] Wis. viii. 1.

His realm of grace! Must it be said that man resists his God when sun, moon, and stars are wholly obedient to Him? How sad! the human spirit resists the divine, while all the flowers and fruits are in sweet submission! Then look at our various powers—the intellect, made for divine knowledge, that might so open to heavenly science, spends away its vitality on vain and gross activities. All these are darkening to the mind, ever hindering the shinings of the divine light within us. Well might we train ourselves to the cultivation of spiritual and divine things, if we but give the same attention and interest to them that the common run give to music, poetry, and fiction. How eagerly they go to the "cheap toys of time's short day"! They run quicker to death than we do to life. On and on the mind will go. It *will* think on something—will feed itself with reading. But each is at the bidding of his own counsel. If we will, we may go to divine as well as human things. The Church has a delightful spiritual literature. To know it is to love it. But how can it be loved if it be not known? Yet somehow souls and consecrated souls will not give themselves earnestly and heartily to the practical cultivation of spiritual science and work, albeit that

nothing is so soul-satisfying as this. They follow so much the likings of nature, and thus habits of self-indulgence form, and higher things are shut out by lower. And thus it follows that lower things are impediments to higher. The intellect wants training, like all the other powers. It is ceaselessly active—and its activity is well compared to the movement of a mill, ever grinding something. But see what you put into the mill. Let it work at corn, not chaff. So see what goes into the intellectual mill. Our powers are not made for play. The intellect is made for the knowledge of God and things appertaining to His love and service. What a thousand pities to load it with impediments to all this!

*The sun shines not in, if the windows are shut.*

What is to be said for the heart and its affections? Of course, all along the line of life they are tending to love. We know they have been made for the love of God and the things of His divine will and service. They are equally active with the intellect, and *will* engage themselves with something. We are creatures of habit. What a pity not to think of this in time. Repetitions of the heart's

affection begin with the dawn of reason. Quickly, indeed, poor, weak, fallen human nature tends downward. Its love is at once caught up. Its likings and desires daily and hourly assert themselves. Holy Mother Church is indeed there ready with her helps. Her first lesson is to direct it to God by acts of faith, hope, and charity. Soon would the love of God grow with repetitions of act into habit and become a spring of fresh action were young souls trained to exercise it voluntarily and earnestly day by day. But of course if higher habits are not insured, lower ones quickly get the entrance, and the lower become impediments to the higher. The memory is a wonderful power, and it seems strange that we do not train ourselves to remember with its aid the infinitely great, good, and loving God, so present and so manifested to us in all His works around us. Our Lord God is forever remembering us, thinking of us, attending to us in all His works of nature, grace, and glory. Should we not love to think of Him in return? But there it is—the memory is crowded with other things: and thus the impediments within this faculty are abounding.

By the inexorable laws of nature, if we do not engage our greater powers with higher

things, lower inclinations, passions, and tendencies play upon the inferior powers of the imagination and senses, and these gathering strength by the use and liberty allowed them, the higher faculties for want of due discipline and exercise suffer a diminution of strength, or even become corrupted by the lower influences; as even the poet says:

*But ill for him who bettering not with time,*
*Corrupts the strength of heaven-descended will,*
*And ever weaker grows.*

Voluntary self-discipline is what is needed to escape these consequences. Yet souls have not the courage of their convictions. They see the better things and do the worse. They are "drawn aside, and allured." Why not "dare do all that may become a man," and all that may become a consecrated soul? Have we not professed to "put off the old man and put on the new man"? What is this but that we leave the lower things of nature and cleave to the higher things of grace? The lower are the impediments to the higher. Certain it is that God desires to possess our souls and rule our faculties. But He governs by law and order. The vessel has first to be cleansed, then only may it be filled.

## IV

### The Right Spirit Within

How true it is that after all our endeavours to provide for the external works of life, on which, indeed, we so laudably expend our time and energies, the main thing before God and heaven is the formation of the right spirit within. Much here will depend upon our remembrance of the twofold life within us, that of nature and that of grace. Nature has wonderful powers and activities: and they are well accommodated to life in the world. Then, as Newman reminds us, the Church is in the world and the world is in the Church. Thus it is that spirituals and temporals are closely and constantly intertwined together, and well indeed in all the works of Holy Church may churchmen be upon their guard, *fearing the taint of an infected world*, seeing that to worldly activities they must oppose the activities of a strong human spirit. Yet as priests and consecrated souls we want more than the mere human spirit, seeing that "for Christ we are ambassadors, God, as it were, exhorting by

us,"[1] and seeing that the life of grace is for action as well as that of nature; and, further, that grace is for the governance of nature and the spirit of God for the governance of the human spirit. Thus have our lives to be put into design and order, in view to "unfulfilled possibilities."

Owing to the twofold life of nature and grace, their corresponding loves become a dual principle within us. To the natural mind corresponds divine faith; and to the natural love corresponds divine love, called charity, both being infused theological virtues. Thus, as is often said, grace is grafted on nature. Now, as nature is so active, grace ought to be active, too; and grace has to govern nature. It is in the life of grace and at the point of divine charity that the spirit of God is in contact with man's soul. For as in human life friends are not united except by the bond of mutual love, so neither are the soul and God in friendship together, except by the life of mutual love in divine charity.

However, acts beget habits: and habits will not serve us except they be sufficiently developed. Natural life and love have been long developed within us by long-continued exercise and repetition. But divine love as a

[1] 2 Cor. v. 20.

principle has not been allowed nearly enough scope in our lives. Yet this it is of which we say so often, *Spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis,* for which we implore: *Spiritum sanctum tuum ne auferas a me;* and again, *Spiritu principali confirma me;* and again and again, *Veni sancte spiritus.* The right spirit within is the spirit of God governing us through the habit of charity—*mediante habitu caritatis.* Thus St. Paul: "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us,"[1] and St. John, *Deus caritas est, et qui manet in caritate in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.*[2] Here is the mutual love between the soul and God, by which God dwells in us and we in Him: which love, in the nature of love, is at once the bond of union and the spring of action. This is the right spirit within. Here, in the habit of divine charity, God and the soul meet together, live together, and work together. This habit of charity has to grow, by constant use and action, into perfect form within the soul, loving God above all, wholly and fully, and overflowing in love to our neighbour till it works as a perfect habit, promptly, easily, and sweetly. All this is the divine and perfect spirit within, bring-

[1] Rom. v. 5. [2] 1 John iv. 16.

ing the soul of man wholly under the governance of the spirit of God. But it is not attained all at once. The habit grows little by little; and the spirit of God gradually subdues the spirit of man to Himself: then makes him partaker of His own light, love, life, and happiness, and sharer of all His gifts and fruits.

How impressively Our Lord teaches us in the Gospel of the need of looking to the interior, and how, if that is well attended to, the rest will follow: "First make clean the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside may become clean."[1] The words were addressed to the scribes and pharisees, who attended so carefully to the externals of religion; but they had not the right spirit within. In moral and spiritual things the inner soul moves us to the outer act. If the spirit within be right, it moves us to right acts; if it be wrong, it moves us to wrong acts. Hence the scholastic saying, *operatio sequitur esse.* The operations follow the being. If, therefore, a nature be right, pure, and loving, its outer works follow accordingly, and become right, pure, and loving. Thus Our Lord's words, spiritually applied, are exactly true—cleanse your interior spirit

[1]Matt. xxiii. 26.

by the life of faith and love and your external works will be those of faith and love also.

It must ever be remembered that Our Lord God requires both the exterior and the interior homage of His creatures. We see it from the beginning. Abel offered of his firstlings and Cain of his fruits to the Lord. Here is their external homage. "The Lord had regard to Abel and his offerings. But to Cain and his offerings He had no regard."[1] Why this difference? Abel had the right spirit within, but not so Cain. "Man seeth the things that appear, but God regardeth the heart."[2] The outer works depend upon the inner spirit. Thus all the exactitude of the scribes and pharisees in the externals of their religion could not save them from the condemnation of Our Lord, because they had not the right spirit within. How perfect was the heart of Abraham; and so his external homage was perfect. See him going forth from his country, his kindred, and his father's house at the word of the Lord, building an altar to the Lord, and calling on His name. See his faith in believing without seeing or understanding. Then the command from God, "Walk before Me and be perfect." "And Abram fell flat on his

[1]Gen. iv. 4. [2]1 Kings xvi. 7.

face."[1] See the perfection at once of his inward and outward homage as he prepares to sacrifice his son. He is the pattern of all true believers, of all who make their faith effective by their works, because they have the right spirit within.

God's will for the externals of religion is nowhere more manifest than among His chosen people of old. "They shall make Me a sanctuary, and I will dwell in the midst of them. And the altar shall be sanctified by My glory. And the cloud covered the tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord filled it."[2] "These are the precepts and ceremonies and judgments which the Lord hath commanded. Hear, O Israel, and observe to do them. Love the Lord thy God, and observe His precepts and ceremonies and judgments and commandments at all times."[3]

Josephus tells us how greatly astonished and affected the Queen of Sheba was when visiting Solomon and observing the splendour of the palace and the temple, noted the daily sacrifices offered to God, and the reverence of the priests and servers. Seeing it day by day, she was in the greatest admiration, and openly confessed how much it had impressed her.

[1] Gen. xvii. 1-3. [2] Ex. xxv. 29, 40. [3] Deut. vi. and xi.

Later on we see how easily the people of God, in the midst of the many long-continued outward ceremonies of religion, deteriorated in that which God requires before all, neglecting the interior faith and love, which gives the true life and spirit to all the rest. Then the words of God change: and He who had prescribed so carefully and minutely the externals of His worship now blames the very observances He had ordained: and this because those that practised them with all exactness rested in the outward actions and neglected the inward purity of heart typified by them. "Your Sabbaths and festivals I will not abide. My soul hateth your solemnities. I am weary of bearing them. When you multiply prayer I will not hear. Wash yourselves, and be clean. Cease to do perversely. Learn to do well. And then come, saith the Lord."[1]

Thus it was that God protested to His chosen people, that although the externals of religion be in themselves so good, and according to the divine will and ordinance, yet will He despise and detest an exact performance of them if there be not the right spirit within.

And so it is in Christianity and Catholi-

[1]Is. i. 13-18.

cism: we must give to God the homage of our entire being, exterior and interior. The instinct of natural religion should lead us to praise, adore, and glorify the Creator of all in the wondrous works of His hand, around, above, and within us. How constantly the fervid psalmist invites us to this: "How great are Thy works, O Lord. Thou hast made all things in wisdom: the whole earth is filled with Thy greatness."[1] "The Lord is great, and exceedingly to be praised. Praise and beauty are before Him; holiness and majesty in His sanctuary. Bring ye to the Lord glory and honour. Bring up sacrifices, and come into His courts. Let all the earth be moved at His presence."[2]

So, too, in the legacy of revelation, of which the Catholic Church is the divinely appointed trustee, we enjoy to the full all the beauty of the Church's outer worship. The old law was the shadow of the good things to come. If, then, "the ministration of death was glorious, how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather in glory? For if that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is in glory."[3] Thus, if the people of old had so many tokens of the divine presence in their

[1]Ps. ciii. 24. [2]Ex. xxv. 20, 40. [3]2 Cor. iii. 7-11.

midst, was it not all to show forth in the perfect dispensation the reality of Our Lord's sacramental presence in His Church? If God willed the cherubim to "spread forth their wings over the ark, and cover it,"[1] and if Solomon made "figures of cherubim" on the walls and doors of the temple,[2] does it not all bespeak the presence of angels around Our Lord's own tabernacle? And if God prescribed so much outward beauty and ceremonial in the temple and sacrifices of the old law, is it not fitting that the hidden presence of Our Lord and His angels and the oblation of the greatest act on earth in the sacrifice of the Mass should be surrounded with all the richness of outer homage, liturgy, and ceremonial that the Church ordains?

Thus it is that all the year round, day and night, on thousands of altars and in thousands of sanctuaries, the perpetual homage of the Mass and the Divine Office rises from earth to heaven in the different countries of the world: and if the loving God is constantly offended by the sins and ingratitude of His creatures, He is continually honoured and loved by the praises and prayers of His faithful children; and thus the evil of the

[1]Ex. xxxvii. 9. [2]3 Kings viii. 7.

world is counterbalanced by the holiness of the Church. In this way it is that we train ourselves to love all the ordinances of Our Lord and His holy Church, in the seasons and festivals of the year that keep Him and His blessed Mother, the angels and the saints day by day constantly before us, feeling that all the Church tells us represents the divine will to be done, down to the smallest rubric, though it be but a simple genuflection or a drop of holy water.

But let it never be forgotten—we must have the real thing. The body is for the soul, and the shell for the kernel, and the outside is for the inside. In all we do externally we must work from the inmost spirit of divine faith and love; faith illuminating the mind and love enkindling the heart. This it is that gives to God the homage of the interior, keeping the soul in due relation to Him as our ultimate end. He wants the heart more than all. We come from Him, belong to Him, return to Him. Love is preference, and God must ever be in the first place within us.

How will it be if we enjoy the grandest externals of religion without the inner life of mutual love with God? We know how it

will be. The Apostle tells us. We shall be as "a sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal."[1] And all for want of the right spirit within.

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 1.

## V

## The Spirit of our State

¶ It is according to the wisdom and the will of heaven that there should be many different states of life here below, both in the natural and the spiritual order of things. Thus it is that the Divine Providence maintains and carries on the governance of the world. And thus it is that we are made to depend not only on God, but on one another also. And this double dependence it is that leads us in the nature of the case to the knowledge, love, and service both of God and of man, this being the essential constitutive of Christian perfection. Falling in, as we should, with this divine scheme of things, we see at once the necessity of the different states of life, that all may be provided for in due time, order, and measure, in view to the course of the world and the well-being and progress of mankind, individually and collectively.

As this life is the preparation for the next, it is evident that we have to provide both for the present and the future. And prop-

erly, the course of our life here below ought to be ordered to our ultimate end. The different states are but accidental—the attainment of the ultimate end is essential. But God places and chooses each one according to the purpose of His will, for His own ends, and the varied needs of all around us. The world goes on by means of Matrimony; therefore men are called to be fathers and women to be mothers. Children are called into being to carry on the race. Nurses and teachers must be there, to protect and educate them. Schools must be organised for the many, and all the ins and outs of community life be provided for. Then each one has many and varied needs, and all must be considered and attended to. Some, therefore, must provide food, others clothing, and all of so many sorts and kinds. The earth must be tilled, proper implements must be forged, and means of transit discovered. Thus different states of life naturally and necessarily form and multiply. Rulers of people, cities, and nations must be found; and this means authority and obedience. Roads must be laid, animals bred, trees, flowers, fruits, vegetables, seeds planted, trained, cultivated, and gathered in. Seas and oceans must be traversed, and every line of business duly

marked out. All this, and so much more, tells us how different states of life clearly enter into the counsels of Divine Wisdom and Providence.

Seeing that, as a fact, the world with all its orders and states of life in the various nations has gone on for so many centuries and thousands of years increasing and multiplying its resources, gathering more and more its vast experiences, evolving so many marvelous inventions, enjoying a vast material prosperity, and handing on the benefits of its immense wealth, science, culture, and experience to future generations—seeing all this, and so much more in connection with it all, it must be admitted that the world with all its wisdom finds its children well equipped for their manifold works and full of interest and energy in carrying them out. Knowledge, love, will-power, memory, imagination, physical strength, determination of purpose, and perseverance are all brought to bear upon the duties of life. So it is. The world is wise. Things must be done. And according to the end, the course must be directed.

In like manner provision is made by God for the spiritual needs of mankind. After all, what will it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul? The

salvation of souls, therefore, is the main object of life here below. But alas! we belong to a fallen race, and the Apostle tells us that "the whole world is seated in wickedness."[1] Strong, therefore, are the forces against which grace has to strive. God Himself is ever the chief agent, as in nature, so in grace. But His plan in all is to use the agency of His creatures. Thus He becomes man in order to aid us. Then He wills to give His powers to His Church. "All things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you."[2] "Going, therefore, teach all nations."[3] In this way begins the vast organisation of the Catholic Church, the spiritual world within the temporal world. And again the necessity of all the states of life in the spiritual order for the efficiency of the Church's work on earth becomes apparent. However, "the kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed"; its beginnings being small, then growing, spreading, and developing in "the rolling majesty of time," till "their sound has gone forth into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world." Thus St. Paul refers to the different states in the Church: "There are diversities of graces, but the same spirit.

[1] 1 John v. 19. [2] John xv. 15. [3] Matt. xxviii. 19.

And there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all. For as the body is one, and hath many members, so also is Christ. . . . But God hath set the members, every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him; and if they were all one member, where would be the body? And God indeed hath set some in the Church—first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly doctors, after that miracles, then the graces of healings, helps, governments, kinds of tongues, interpretation of speeches."[1]

The Church's hierarchy circles around the Apostolic See, and thus the different orders of bishops, priests, deacons, and inferior ministers all find their place and work. The great religious orders, all tending together to the perfection of charity as their common end, by means of their vows and proper rules and the smaller congregations, brotherhoods, and sisterhoods, blending active and contemplative element together, all supply many and varied states and works of life. Many are the grades of superiors and many more of subjects within all and each, and varied and manifold are the works to be done for God,

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 4, 12, 28.

for the Church, and for souls. Thus we see, as in the world, so in the Church, the need of different states, and with them their varied requirements, offices, and works. "But all these things one and the same spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as He will."[1]

Seeing this as we ever should in the light of God and of divine faith, we believe that God Himself is ever the chief agent in the things both of nature and grace, *Deus est agens principale,* but that He wills man to work with Him. And thus we come to the life of mutual love between man and God, God loving us and we loving Him; He giving Himself to us and we giving ourselves to Him; He abiding with us and we with Him; He working with us and we working with Him. This brings us to the inner life and spirit of our state. Let it never be forgotten that the brightest externals without the right spirit within will bring us to the "sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal." Externals, indeed, must be well attended to and well done, for "in God nothing is neglected."[2] But the spirit of God and the spirit of love must be in them. *Spiritus est qui vivificat.*[3] And here it is

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 11. [2] Eccles. vii. 19. [3] John vi. 64.

that we find the spirit of all the different states of life, *viz.*, the spirit of God governing all, through the principle of His love, and the soul working with Him through the same principle. As the Apostle says: "There are diversities of graces, but the same spirit: and there are diversities of operations, but the same God who worketh all in all." This is the happy, mutual life, and love, and work between the soul and God, implying love for the state in which God places us, love for its duties, love of doing them, and doing them well. This is the spirit that giveth life to all our outward forms and works. May God grant it to grow, strengthen, and be well established within us. It connotes the union of the spirit of God with the spirit of man by means of the theological virtue of charity. Thus the increated charity governs us through the habit of created charity, and God and the soul live and work together. "He must increase, but I must decrease."[1] Well, therefore, is the whole work of our perfection epitomised in the development of our charity. But operation follows life. With the *life* of love, therefore, between the soul and God must be the *works* of love. That is, the mutual love (called in one word

[1] John iii. 30.

*caritas*) moves each one to the proper works of his state and office: and by the fulfilment of these day by day and hour by hour the work of our perfection progresses. And the more frequently and perfectly the habit of charity is brought into act, the closer becomes the soul's union with God and the quicker is its progress in spiritual perfection.

We ought to love to think of all these things. They appertain to the highest interests of life here and hereafter. We should study to throw our lives into design. And we ought to be in constant progress to the end of perfect charity. And charity itself should energise in all the works of daily life. This it is that brings us little by little to the true spirit of our state, living and working with God therein, moving us to love the state in which He has placed us, to love its duties, to love doing them, and doing them well: all for His own great ends and the vast needs of souls. This points to the intentions we may and should have in all we do and suffer, in union with our blessed Lord, in heaven and on earth, in His sacramental and sacrificial life, in union with our blessed Lady and all the angels and saints and the whole living Church on earth. And much will the

remembrance of these intentions spur us on to fervour in all we do and suffer. And vastly, indeed, will the cultivation and development of the inner spirit support and strengthen us in all our outer works, seeing that hereby the soul of man is in constant touch with the spirit of God. And in the time of trial and suffering the same sweet spirit will sweeten all.

But, as already said again and again, the attainment of this will necessarily require a consistent practice of prayer and mortification: the one to lift the spirit upward to God, the other to subdue the inclinations of the natural man. Nor can there be anything like earnest progress to the end of perfect charity without the habitual use of these effectual and indispensable means thereto.

## VI

## The Unseen World

By the light of faith we see the eternal and adorable Trinity intimately present in the entire creation, in all the works of nature, grace, and glory. And this, above all, is the glory of the world invisible. "I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord."[1] He is "above all, and through all, and in us all."[2] "Of Him, and by Him, and in Him are all things."[3] "In Him we live, and move, and have our being."[4] The realising of this divine presence and working all around, above, and within us, and the subduing ourselves hereto, according to the divine plan and will, is the chief of all factors in the work of our spiritual formation and perfection. And of all devotions none is higher or better than devotion to the divine presence. It was eminently the making of the saints. Let us observe, for our great advantage and help to spiritual progress, the presence of each of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity in the

[1] Jer. xxiii. 24.
[2] Eph. iv. 6.
[3] Rom. xi. 36.
[4] Acts xvii. 28.

world around us. God is the God at once of nature and of grace, and thus the natural and spiritual orders are closely blended together. All external works are attributable to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity together; yet, in a certain way, according to our own imperfect modes of consideration, we easily associate the creation and conservation of the universe and all created things with the eternal Father, the whole scheme of redemption and the supernatural order with the divine Son, and the governance and sanctification of the Church with the Holy Ghost. This association is clearly observable in the Apostles' Creed.

"The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made: His eternal power also and divinity."[1] Thus it is that we rise from nature unto nature's God. This realisation of God's presence, power, beauty, wisdom, love, in all the works of His hand, above, around, within us, it is that has made the saints such men of contemplation. And truly this contemplative spirit it is that gives such largeness, breadth, light, love, and joy to all the works of life. Who enjoys the beauties of nature more than

[1]Rom. i. 20.

a soul that ever sees God's wisdom, beauty, and loveliness intimately in them all? And are they not all of them forever calling out with ten thousand tongues to us to think of Him and ever remember Him and love Him more than all, who made them and gives them to us so abundantly to enjoy? Thus Our Lord to St. Catherine of Siena: "Never suffer any of the things that My bounty has made to hinder thee from loving Me: for to this end have I made them, and given them to man, that he, seeing through them the riches of My goodness, may love Me in return with a larger affection."[1] It would seem to be an easy and a natural thing for the creature thus to recognise the love of the Creator when we are perpetually seeing and enjoying all His good things around us. But the fact is that we forget the love of the Giver in the enjoyment of His gifts. We ought to train ourselves much more to the thought of the divine presence all around, above, and within us; and as the beauties of divine wisdom, power, and love are perpetually showering down upon us every day, hour, and moment, they are ever declaring to us the unceasing thought and love of God for the creatures of His hand. Who would

[1]Dialog. "Consummate perfection."

not look with wonder and delight at the superb views of the natural world around us as we gaze from an eminence, let us say, covered with flowering heather and gorse, and see the rising hills, one above another, all about us, and far beneath their crags and chasms, with their mazy shades and fretted foliage? Here is a rushing torrent, and soon a roaring cataract, and deep down the swift river cleaves her way between the parted heights, rich and smiling valleys stretching out in clustered plains toward the snow-clad mountain chain in the majesty of distance now set off, with aerial softness clad, and beautified with evening's purple beams. Erelong the sun sends a slant and mellow radiance, which begins to fall upon us. Soon comes still evening on. . . .

*Now glows the firmament*
*With living sapphires. Hesperus, that leads*
*The starry host, rides brightest, till the moon,*
*Rising in clouded majesty, at length*
*Apparent queen, unveils her peerless light*
*And o'er the dark her silver mantle throws.*

"How great are Thy works, O Lord. Thou hast made all things in wisdom. The whole earth is filled with Thy riches."[1] And

[1] Ps. ciii. 24.

as in great, so in little things, God is ever wonderful and magnificent. The flowers delight us with their lovely forms and colours: and the fruits refresh us in all their sweetness and abundance. And how vast and wondrous is the multiplication of them all in billions and trillions, yet each leaf is a marvel of creative power and beauty, utterly beyond the ability of all the world together. And as we contemplate all these large and loving communications of God's wisdom and power for the benefit and enjoyment of His creatures in the natural order are we not at once led on to see the like communications which He makes in the spiritual order to those that love Him? Do not His graces fall upon us in rills and cataracts? But the difference is, He finds impediments within the souls of men and in nature no impediments. Look at the abundance of these blossoms on our fruit trees. God works there so richly because nothing is found to resist Him. So would He work in our souls the marvels of His grace, light, and love were we only subdued in the like way to His divine operations. But we go the way of our natural activities, and so perpetually put impediments to the effluences of His divine light and love. *Quia ubi vasa vacua non invenit,*

*stare oleum necesse est.*[1] "The more entirely thou dost empty thy heart of that which is thine own, the more abundantly will I fill it with that which is Mine."[2]

All this is to tell us how perpetually the loving God is thinking of His creatures, manifesting His presence, wisdom, love, power, and beauty to them, giving so richly, so largely, so lovingly of His gifts in the things of nature and grace, for our powers of soul and body, with their varied abilities of knowing, loving, working, and enjoying, are marvellous. And dear friends around us—let us say men and angels—are ever with us, declaring the glories of the Creator and sharing His gifts and graces with us.

How infinitely beautiful are the workings of God and how adapted to the needs and desires of our nature! It is as though the Divine Loveliness were not contented with surrounding and penetrating us through and through with the beauties of nature and grace and their multiplication upon us every day, hour, and moment. He *must* come nearer and nearer to us. But His law must stand. He gives Himself, and yet He hides Himself. As it is in nature, so it is in grace.

[1] St. Bern. Serm. 3 in Ascen Dom.
[2] St. Cath. Sien Dial. Cons. perfect.

As long as we are here below He will have us walk by faith and not by sight. Yet He contrives by mysterious means to give Himself more closely and less hiddenly. And this is the special work of the eternal Son of God for the benefit of the world. "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son." *Filius datus est nobis.*[1] The Son of God becomes the Son of man. But the law is there. He hides His divinity that we may still give Him the homage of our faith, but He shows His humanity. And at times, condescending to our weakness, He sends forth the shinings of the divine through the human, as in the transfiguration, the resurrection, and the ascension, and in the wonders of many miracles during His life on earth and since.

But the divine life and operations of the eternal Son pass from the few years of His visible dwelling on earth, saving the world from sin, teaching the nations through the apostles and their successors the truths of revelation, and giving the example of perfect love and living—pass to the continuation, prolongation, and extension of His incarnation in His still more hidden and wondrous sacrificial and sacramental life in the

[1] Is. ix. 6.

Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, wherein, having already given Himself to our nature in the incarnation, He now gives Himself to us one by one in His eucharistic life, thus making the Church on earth truly the reflection of the Church in heaven. For as in heaven God manifests Himself in all His glory, making the angels and saints sharers and partakers of His divine light, love, life, and happiness, so by His sacramental life He gives Himself to the Church throughout the world even now, and where the King is, there is the court. "Let all the angels of God adore Him."[1] *Tibi cherubim et seraphim.* And the saints in heaven, associated with the angels, and sharing with them the glories of the divine life, are represented here below by the multitude of faithful souls, ever surrounding Our Lord in His sacramental life. Thus in heaven the glories of the divine presence, with their everlasting effluences of light, love, and happiness, are reflected on earth, giving us perpetually through life the enjoyments at once of the world visible and invisible. And small wonder that St. Paul says: "We look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen: for the things which are seen

[1] Heb. i. 6.

are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."[1]

But giving so much of our attention and interest to things external and accidental, we form corresponding habits, and so very insufficiently realise the world unseen—Our Lord's hidden presence in the tabernacle, the Mass (the greatest act on earth), and Holy Communion, ever in our midst, all the world over, with the bright cherubim and seraphim in perpetual attendance on their King, yea, and associating themselves with the dear angels guardian and with us, more especially with loving souls—all hidden from our view, except we cultivate the inner spirit and so see with eyes of faith and love the glories of the life behind the veil.

What a compendium of Our Lord's life on earth, hidden, active, suffering, and glorified, His sacramental life seems to be! Our Lord lived His long, hidden life at Nazareth, and continues it till the end of time in the Blessed Sacrament. Ought we not to love to be hidden, too? How sublime a lesson He gives us of the true greatness and value of life! "All the glory of the king's daughter is from within."[2] Man seeth the things that appear, but God regardeth the heart."[3] The

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 18. [2] Ps. xliv. 14. [3] 1 Kings xvi. 7.

inner habit of love divine, all disposed to its acts, uniting mind, heart, and all the powers with God, this is the great reality, energising in its own life and power, independently of externals. Why should we pine for accidents? "All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."[1] All the beauties of nature, grace, and glory are ours if we are "all for God." As the "Imitation" is so fond of saying, "Leave all and thou shalt find all."[2] That is, give up all these lesser habits of mere natural, selfish activity and gratification and seize upon the divine habit of habits, love divine, all for God, overflowing in love to others, according to God, not according to man, and all things are yours, through the pourings of wisdom, love, beauty, and power divine, ever descending and surrounding and penetrating us in eternal light, love, and happiness. Thus "the lover gives all for all, and has all in all."[3]

Little will a soul all settled thus in inner life and love with God heed as to how, when, and where it is employed externally. Provided it lives with Him, and according to Him in the inner life of mutual love, all externals are but accidentals. The great habit of its life is ever energising within, with our

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 22. [2] iii. 32. [3] Imit. iii. 5.

dear Lord, in His hidden sacramental life all the world over—our dear Lady, the cherubim, seraphim, and all the angels and saints, and the whole living Church. Thus such a soul is *semper agens*—always working for God's great ends and the vast needs of souls, in its union every day, hour, and moment, with the Church triumphant, suffering, and militant. And if it be left alone, it is never less alone than when alone, living in the full union of the life of love with God and with His creatures. This is indeed life in the unseen world—but how full! how soul-satisfying! And well may such an one cry out with St. Augustine, "The fill of all that is not God to me is want."[1]

> There dare no flesh-fly
> rest on the pot's brink
> that boils on the fire.[2]

So when a soul is ever in the sweet life of love with God and the glories of its full union with Him and the heavenly court it admits not the hum of vain, fleshly, perishable things.

Consider now the outpourings of the spirit of God upon the entire creation in nature,

[1] Omnis copia quæ Deus non est, egestas mihi est. Conf. xiii. 8.

[2] From Hilton.

grace, and glory. In the beginning it was the spirit of God that "moved upon the face of the waters"; and "the spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world."[1] Look at the immense universe around and above us! O God, how great are Thy works! Look at the astonishing size and power of our sun, 860,000 miles in diameter, our earth whirling around it at the rate of 60,000 miles an hour! And so of all the other planets—the nearer the sun, the quicker their movement.

But all this vast system dwindles to a point before the immeasurably distant stars, a hundred billions of miles away! O God, how great are Thy works! How intimately present the spirit of God is in all His works! How we should train ourselves to remember Him, think of Him, contemplate Him, admire Him, love Him, both in Himself and in all around, above and within us!

"The kingdom of God is within you." The soul of man is the kingdom of God, formed to His likeness, and His "homeliest home" on earth. It is as a mirror, reflecting the divine light and love within. See the countless millions of souls on earth from beginning to end. Reason itself is a light divine, reflecting the Eternal Reason, showing us

[1]Wis. i. 7.

"the invisible things of God by the things that are made,"[1] moving us to love and serve the Creator and give Him the homage of natural religion.

But over and above all this God makes His revelation to man, first by the patriarchs and prophets, then by His Son, who brought divine truth and grace into the world. And here revealed religion is added to natural religion—God being the God at once of nature and grace. Our Lord Himself gave the revelation of divine truth to His apostles: "All things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you."[2] Then organising His Church for the transmission of truth and grace to nations and peoples till the end: for such is God's plan, to give His gifts to men through the agency of other creatures, as in nature, so in grace.

But for such a divine work the Divine Spirit must be the governing and moving power. Hence the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. And here we have the moving spirit of the unseen world in the midst of us, animating the whole Church, militant, suffering, and triumphant. Would that we might all be governed by the spirit of God! But alas! the human spirit is

[1] Rom. i. 20. [2] John xv. 15.

so strong within us! and its activities get us into formed habits of thought and work, making abiding impediments to the governance of the Divine Spirit within us.

Hence the whole work of a spiritual life is the bringing of all our natural powers—memory, intellect, heart, will—and each one of our senses and members little by little under the governance of the spirit of God, that God alone may rule in His own kingdom, and all within us may be subject to Him. Happy the soul that is thus "all for God."

And with the Holy Ghost come the divine delights of His gifts and fruits, all ingrafted habits, connected together in the habit of habits,[1] the "charity of God poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us."[2]

Seeing that where the King is, there is the court, and seeing that God is everywhere in nature, grace, and glory, it must be admitted that the holy angels are all around and about us, adding so much in God's own lovely designs to the beauties and glories of the world unseen. Does it not follow from all this that heaven is rather a

[1]Connectuntur sibi invicem in caritate. St. Thom. i. 2. Q. 68. A. 5.
[2]Rom. v. 5.

divine *state* of life than a limited space located somewhere in creation? "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord."[1] Remembering, too, Our Lord's wondrous sacramental life throughout the world—His life in the tabernacle, His world-wide oblation in the Holy Mass, His gift to our souls, one by one, of Himself, and the workings of His grace, and the effluences of His light and love around and within the souls of men in the Holy Communion—and the attendance on Him of the cherubim and seraphim wheresoever He is throughout the world—*Tibi cherubim et seraphim*—and seeing, too, the other great orders of the angelic choirs working under the ordinances of the divine wisdom, love, and power for the beauty, glory, benefit, and order of heavenly and earthly life together—and seeing that each individual soul has its own proper angel guardian to keep it in all its ways—oh, have we not truly around, above, and within us, even here below, the life of God and heaven, hidden from us now because "we walk by faith and not by sight,"[2] but seen in all its reality when we enter the world of spirits at the moment of death? Now there is a wall of partition around us by the bodies of our

[1] Jer. xxiii. 24. [2] 2 Cor. v. 7.

corruption, and we just see the things of sense with the eyes of the flesh. When death claims the body and the spirit passes the veil, the world which is now invisible breaks on us in all its majesty and glory. Are our souls already purified in the life of love with God, having attained the developed habit of habits by a consistent exercise of prayer and mortification, so that all impediments to the life of divine union have been already removed, then the separated spirit, freed from the trammels of the flesh, and bright with divine light and love, will find itself not in a region of dissimilitude, but similitude. It will be like to the spirits of the just made perfect; like to the dear angels; yea, like to God Himself. "When He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is. And every one that hath this hope sanctifieth himself, as He also is holy."[1] If, however, the work of perfection has not been finished the fellowship of the bright world of spirits will be at once uncongenial until the soul's purification be completed. Such as these fly with all alacrity to the cleansing process of purgatory, which is indeed a realm of love wherein souls love God above all things, and that overflowing in love

[1] 1 John iii. 2.

to one another; neither will any sin enter there, but moment by moment, their purification proceeding, these souls will get nearer and nearer to the perfect union of love with God, until the divine habit of habits being fully perfected, they will enter all joyfully the region of similitude, being like to the saints and angels and Our Lord God Himself, and sharing with Him and them the divine light, love, life, and happiness in the everlasting realms of peace and joy, with all the prerogatives of spiritual and glorified nature.

Coming back again to present things, and seeing the cherubim and seraphim in constant attendance on Our Lord in His sacramental and sacrificial life, the question occurs as to whether these higher choirs of heavenly spirits are at any time found ministering to the souls of men in addition to their ordinary guardian angels. It may fully be admitted that such is indeed the case. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent to minister to them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?"[1] St. Paul here implies that they *all* minister to us. The cherubim guarded the tree of life in paradise. The Prophet Isaias was touched by a seraph.

[1] Heb. i. 14.

Tobias was befriended by the archangel. Daniel was touched by Gabriel, swiftly flying, and fell to the ground. Ezechiel had a vision of cherubim. Quite probably, as souls get nearer to God by the union of love, and detaching themselves from sensual and earthly things, find their joy in communing with God and the world of spirits; and training themselves to spiritual habits, and realising more and more the divine presence, and delighting in Our Lord's sacramental life, with His cherubim and seraphim, it is quite to be supposed, by the very laws of friendship, that the divine Lover of Souls will, as souls correspond to Him and leave all things to find Him, seek them and love them more and more, and delight in bringing His bright angelic attendants to see them. And how a dear angel loves to stand by a pure soul and reflect himself therein! And as the cherubim are spirits of divine light and seraphim spirits of divine love, we may well feel that as a soul, purifying itself from earthly dross, is brought more and more under the pourings of God's own light and love, the cherubim and seraphim will become the very ministering spirits of the divine light and love to these souls, God thus using the agency of His own creatures in the realms of grace as

He does in things of nature. And thus when pure souls receive, as they so often do, many a flash of divine light to know the things of God, while God Himself darts His light and truth upon them, as the Psalmist says, "Send forth Thy light and Thy truth," yet, from the analogy of natural things, it will seem that frequently or ordinarily He gives His light to souls through His ministers of light. In this way it will be the appointed work of the dear cherubim to transmit the divine light to pure and loving souls, and how they will love to reflect themselves therein, and how abundantly will faithful souls receive the treasures of divine light through the shinings of these exalted spirits! And so it will be in the communication of the divine love to loving souls. God, indeed, and the soul are ever united in the life of mutual love by the habit of divine charity. "I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one."[1] And many a sweet touch of love in the inmost heart does He give to those who are all for Him. And Our Lord in His sacramental life comes to us one by one, teaching and training loving souls in the secret ways of divine love and strengthening the habit of habits within them during the

[1] John xvii. 23.

times of His abiding presence in His "homeliest home." Yet with all this it seems entirely in accordance with God's own appointed ways of working in grace and nature together that He should give to our souls the communications of His love through the spirits of love, the glowing seraphim, ever on fire with love divine, and so ready of their fulness to shed it on the souls of men as they approach nearer and nearer to the union of perfect love with God. How many lights, how many sweet touches of love faithful souls experience in their progress along the way to God! The cherubim with their light and the seraphim with their love are so near to loving souls. And as goodness loves to communicate itself, it will be the delight of these sublime spirits to find among the sons of men souls sufficiently purified to receive in turn from the cherubim flashes of divine light, and from the seraphim touches of divine love. And thus it is that God works in the realms of grace as in those of nature, through the gifts and abilities of His own creatures, and doubtless it will be the same in the realms of everlasting glory.

How mysterious and wonderful will be the lives of our angel guardians here on earth, although they are so glorious that the

sight of one of them would soon send us flat upon the earth, as it did the Prophet Daniel. The countenance of the angel at Our Lord's sepulchre was as "lightning, and his raiment as snow, and the guards were struck, and became as dead men." But the glory of the world invisible is hidden from us now, owing to the body of flesh about the spirit. Thus the angels are all around us in their heaven, enjoying their divine contemplative life and their own ever blessed society, and having their active life among the souls of men. It might seem to be a trial to their exalted natures to be put to the humble service of poor fallen creatures here on earth. Probably it was part of their first probation to foresee these arrangements of the divine wisdom and will. But to perfect and loving spirits it is full happiness to be wholly absorbed in the divine love and will, the mode of their employment being but accidental. "Nothing tastes better to the highest angel than to do My will in all things: so that if he felt it were to My glory to come to earth and root up weeds and nettles, it would be for him of all things the most desirable to perform."[1]

The presence of vast numbers of evil spir-

[1]Etern. Wisdom, c. 9.

its and of departed souls, good and bad, have to be reckoned as belonging to the unseen world around us. Doubtless the fallen angels, who are now devils, will carry their hell with them and at the same time be very busy in our midst, and have constant warfare with the holy angels, probably interfering with the elements and with human affairs much more than we imagine. Thus in the Book of Job we find Satan among the sons of God, saying that he has "gone round about the earth, and walked through it."[1] Then that he busied himself with Job's possessions, fire coming, and striking the sheep and the servants, and finally striking Job himself from head to foot. St. Peter warns us to be sober and watch, for that our adversary the devil goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.[2] Nor can it be doubted that his immense crew of fallen spirits are ever moving and active with him, and probably as numerous as the good angels are. Thus St. Paul reminds us that "our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places."[3] The old vision of a devil asleep on

[1]Job ii. 2. [2]1 Pet. v. 8. [3]Eph. vi. 12.

a stile outside the city, and many others so active inside a monastery, tells us how, as the world goes, evil spirits have little extra to do, but that in fervent communities they are kept constantly alive, striving to draw away consecrated souls from the love and service of God. And how, going to the choir, a devil was seen putting many small things into a bag, which represented the many roving thoughts and careless pronunciation of words in the Divine Office, which were notable among the Religious. Probably also evil spirits play closely and cleverly upon individual souls in their varied temperaments, natural inclinations, shortcomings, and perverse habitudes, and especially try to prevent their doing properly and well what they have to do, and ought to do, *hic et nunc,* in view of hindering the perfection of our ordinary actions.

As to spirits of the departed, otherwise called ghosts, taking into account the history of the world up to our own times, while making large allowance for imagination, brain conditions, trickery, and illusions, and other abnormal subjectivisms, the urgency of credible witnesses and visible facts is far too strong to deny the reality of such innumerable cases of the appearance to others in

this world of discarnated spirits, from the days when the spirit of Samuel returned to earth to converse with Saul, at the bidding of the woman of Endor.[1] If the *rationale* of such appearances be asked, may it not be a condescendence on the part of Providence in its dealings with the miseries of the multitude to keep alive to some extent in a material and unbelieving age at least some degree of assurance in the reality of the unseen world around us, and to urge them not only to live for the present, but to prepare for the future life?

If we see things here below in the light of faith and eternity, if God Himself is all around and within us, if the angels are ever in our midst, and evil spirits also, considering that a hundred thousand souls are daily laying aside their bodies and entering the spiritual world, it seems likely that, departing this life, they would be quickly caught up by the angels or evil spirits, conducted to their judgment and retained discarnate here or elsewhere, as cases may be, for certain times or periods of their purification or punishment; then, maybe, passing elsewhere, some being permitted exceptionally, for certain reasons not seen by us, to show or declare by

[1]Kings xxviii. 13-15.

signs their presence as detained or wandering and unquiet spirits on earth, needing prayers or help or giving warnings, as the case may be, and at the same time discharging temporal punishments or penalties due to past transgressions.

We are all creatures of habit, and acts make habits. All along life's course we have been habituated to live and work in the world of reason and the senses, so that things of the spirit and of the unseen world have come to little development within us. Thus it is that people ignore them. Yet it is not fair or reasonable to ignore evidence. The idea of a ghost in a house induces fright to nearly all, because no habit of commerce with the spiritual world has been formed.

Habitual interior union with God by the habit of mutual love, a practical faith in His divine presence around and within us, the inward governance of the spirit of God, the realisation of Our Lord's sacramental presence on earth, and of the angelic spirits ever around Him and us—all this would dispose us to receive calmly the visit of any disembodied spirit that might present itself, asking in God's name who it might be, and what it might want, and giving it the benefit of prayer.

Considering as life advances that we are getting nearer and nearer to the infinitely vast spiritual world, it would seem to be wise to train ourselves to the realisation of all the spiritual realities around us even here below, so as not to be living in a state of fixed repugnance to death, or finding ourselves in a region of utter and absolute dissimilitude when our spirits, removed from all nearest and dearest earthly attachments, pass beyond the veil.

Thus it is that the Apostle admonishes us: "If you be risen with Christ, mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth."[1] "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."[2]

[1] Col. iii. 1. 2.

[2] 2 Cor. iv. 18.

## VII

### Self-Training and Discipline

Of Socrates it is recorded that "his self-control was absolute. He had so schooled himself to moderation that his scanty means satisfied all his wants. Great was his will-power in practising temperance and self-denial. No one, says Xenophon, ever knew of his saying or doing anything profane or unholy."[1] If all this may be done by the principles of nature, why can we not do the like by the principles of grace? This is the unanswerable argument again.

It is very noticeable, even among those who are consecrated to God in the religious and priestly life, that so many are found thinking, speaking, and acting just according to the inclinations of the natural man, without apparently the serious aim of schooling themselves to live and act consistently from high principle. They enter divine states of life and engage themselves, often too customably, in the externals of their calling, taking or making abundant occasions and oppor-

[1]Encyclop. Britannic.

tunities of indulging natural pleasures and idle gratifications, and apparently not adverting to the frequent repetition of acts as forming corresponding habits, and how that the habits once formed become the spring of fresh action. Thus smoking, sporting, idle talking and visiting, with the habitual use of alcoholic stimulant, all get in the ascendency, acts making habits, and higher habits, from want of repetition of act, are weak and unformed—habits of solid study, of mental prayer and the spirit of prayer, which is *love* of its exercise; of mortification, and of the inner life of love with God, which is the habit of habits—these somehow are not in serious requisition, and yet if we look at things in the light of truth and faith, the formation of these highest habits of life ought to be the main business of our profession as souls consecrated to the love and service of God.

Doubtless many may will it all, but how to accomplish it they find not. The first question, however, is, do they really *desire* to accomplish it? *The lack of desire is the ill of all ills.* They may say they desire it; and certainly without such desire the thing will never be done. But let us put it philosophically. Do they desire it *in sensu deviso*

or *in sensu composito? i.e.,* do they desire it in a mere abstract sense, apart from all the ways and means to get to it? If so, they will never accomplish it. Do they desire it practically and efficaciously, determined, like men of business, to use in right earnest the means to the end? Then they take the first step to its accomplishment. And without such desire no one can do anything that has to be done, whatever it may be. The strange thing is, we understand right well these laws of nature in the common business of life, and we see them not, or deceive ourselves about them, in the work of all works, which is the love and service of God.

What we all want, therefore, is self-training and discipline in spiritual things, from the beginning of our career in the way of God.

All Christians should live a spiritual life in the world. Is not the Divine Master Himself ever in the midst of us in His sacramental life? Is not the Holy Ghost, our life-giver and sanctifier, ever within us? "Why call you Me Lord and Master, and *do not* the things that I say?"[1] People consider well enough how they are to live, but they consider not what they are living for. Each one looks clearly to the object of his profes-

[1] Luke vi. 46.

sion in life and is wise enough to use carefully and industriously and consistently the means to attain it. But the ultimate end of life itself is not kept steadily in view, although it is the main purpose of our existence. All the works we do ought to be ordered thereto. We have design for parts of life, not for the whole of it. Self-training and discipline are clearly needed.

What can be the difficulty about them? Again and again let it be dinned into our ears—we have them for lesser things, why not for the greater? Does not a farmer train up his sons to the use of the plough, the care of the cattle, the tilling of the land, and the gathering of the crops? However much they may incline to roam about the country, they know the work must be done, and they school themselves to do it. Acts make habits, and they live practically under constant self-discipline, till it becomes second nature to them; and to neglect duty would be disgrace before all the folk around. Look at army and navy men and railway men for training and discipline, and observe that they are not only trained, but that they train themselves, and keep it up through life. When they not only do their works, but do them consistently well, and

further *love* to do them so, until all this becomes a formed habit of life, then they have the *spirit* of their state; their heart is in their life and work. How gratifying and satisfying it is to see this! All the world likes it. Surely it ought to be the same in the things of God. A main drawback, however, to this is the way so many have of proceeding in spiritual things in a desultory way instead of by some distinct method.

Certainly we ought to be as earnest and exact in spiritual things as children of the world are in temporals. In every work to be done the law of right reason is to begin by looking at the end; for it is only by so doing that we can know how to proceed in the work. Thus in making a journey the first thing to know is where we are going—from that only we know the way to take. And so a builder first has a design of the finished edifice he is to raise, and from that knowledge he sees the materials he needs, and the forms and models and instruments that will be requisite in rearing the building. Now the spiritual work to be done for God and our own souls is infinitely more important and necessary to us than any of these earthly undertakings. Therefore why do we not proceed in this work of all works according to the like laws of right reason and sound sense?

This would be to throw our life into design—looking in the first place at life's end, union with God by perfect love. From this view we see at once what the course of our life here below has to be. Impediments to this end must be avoided and means to gain it must be employed. Therefore sin must go and everything that leads us away from God must be sacrificed. Prayer and mortification, as indispensable means for developing the life of love, must be exercised all through life, and the duties of our state, according to each one's calling, and the ordinary works of daily life must all be faithfully attended to. This is the way to school ourselves into training and discipline; and why we can not and do not see it and attend to it, and carry it out, in the work of all works, for God and for ourselves, when we have the sense to do all this day by day in the common works of earthly business, is a question to which the only answer seems to be that we live according to nature and not according to grace—according to man, not according to God.

When are we going to reform? When to be converted with the whole heart to God? *Convertimini ad Me in toto corde vestro, ait Dominus omnipotens.*[1]

[1] Joel ii. 12.

# VIII

## Mutual Love

"IF ANY one love Me, My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him."[1]

Thus it is that our blessed Lord bespeaks to us the mutual love that should ever exist between Our Lord God and ourselves. "If any one love Me, My Father will love him, and we will come to him." Here, indeed, is mutual love between God and man. The theological virtue of charity implies and connotes this mutual love. It is not love on one side only. It is God loving us and we loving Him. *Deus caritas est.*[2] He thinks of us and we think of Him. He gives Himself to us and we give ourselves to Him. He abides in us and we in Him.[3] He works with us and we work with Him. He enjoys Himself with us and we enjoy ourselves with Him.

If we look at kings and queens and the great ones of the world, they are as beings apart from ourselves. We may think of

[1]John xiv. 23. [2]John iv. 16.
[3]Qui manet in caritate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo. Ibid.

them and admire them and see them at a distance. But they do not know us, nor love us, and so pass us by without a look of recognition. Here we observe that there is no mutual love. If we come to friends of earth, their love is very limited and often changeable and uncertain: nor is it always very mutual. The best of creatures come and go. Human friendships often come to nought, or worse, and sometimes love changes into hate. "History is full of ruins."

All this is by way of contrast to the divine love and the divine Lover. Our Lord God loves us with an everlasting love, and surrounds us in nature, grace, and glory with the wondrous gifts of His love—so much so that the Apostle cries out, "All things are yours."[1] We may say that all the beauties of nature are ours—ours to see, admire, love, and enjoy. Have you dear friends and relations, and some nearest and dearest? They are all the gifts of God's love to you. Have you life, breath, health, strength, powers of thinking, remembering, loving, willing, seeing, hearing, tasting, talking, walking, working? It is the same—they are the overflowings of God's love

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 22.

upon you, every day, hour, and moment.

Is all this enough? No; not nearly enough. Our Lord God must come down to us, live with us, give Himself to us, abide with us always, even to the end of the world, by His incarnation establishing a new order of things—the order of grace. And thus nature and grace flow in upon our lives every day, hour and moment; the truth of God is the light of our minds, and the love of God the life of our hearts. Our Lord is ever the model and perfect man in the hidden, active, suffering, and glorified life. His Mother becomes the model and the perfect woman, and He gives us to her keeping in union with Himself. His Church is to carry on His work on earth till the end and to transmit His truth and grace to the nations. The spirit of God is sent down on her to lead and keep her in all truth and be the leading and governing spirit to all the children of His grace and love. The sacraments convey the virtue of His precious blood according to the many and varied wants among the souls of men. And more than all, Our Lord Himself, God and man, hides Himself under the sacramental veil, ever to be in our midst, ever to be the pro-

pitiation for our sins in His sacrificial life, and ever ready to come to us one by one in His hidden presence.

But will Our Lord show Himself? Ah, no. Do not ask that. You have plenty without it. There is a time for all things. Afterward we shall see Him. But here, such is His plan, "We walk by faith and not by sight."[1] But He is none the less near. And He makes His "homeliest home" ever in our midst.

Is not Our Lord God in everything offering us Himself? How will it be with those who resist Him? Will He not with justice turn from them and chastise them? "For," He says, "if you wish to adorn yourself, you have My adornment: or to arm yourself, you have My arms: or to dress yourself, you have My clothing: or to eat, you have My table: or to walk, you have My way: or to be rich, you have My inheritance: or to build an edifice, you have My stones. I do not ask a reward of you for the things I give, but I owe interest to you besides if you will use all that is Mine. I am Father, Brother, Friend, and Lover. I am home, I am food, I am clothing. I will also be a slave, for I came to minister, not to be ministered to.

[1] 2 Cor. v. 7.

I am all things whatsoever you desire, only hold Me for your own. I am poor for you and a wanderer for you. I was on the cross for you and in the tomb for you. I intercede with the Father for you above, and I came down to earth as a messenger to you from the Father. You are all things to Me—brother, co-heir, friend, and member. What more do you ask? Why do you turn away from your Friend and Lover? Why labour for the world? Why run at random and pour water into a broken pitcher?"[1]

What now about our love in return to this tremendous Lover?

Certainly we can no more cease to love than we can cease to think. But why should we spend the best love of our hearts on creatures that come and go so quickly—that are so small, changing, and uncertain?

Let us go straight to our dear Lord God, all around, above, and within us, in nature, grace, and glory. He is the Infinitely Great, the Infinitely Wise, the Infinitely Good, the Infinitely Powerful, the Infinitely Loving. He is all for us, every day, hour, and moment. With Him there is no shadow or change of alteration. "Of Him, by Him, and in Him are all things." Let it be our

[1]From St. John Chrys. In Matt. Hom. 76.

delight to enjoy His divine presence. The riches of His wisdom and love are ever pouring in upon us, in all the beauties of nature and grace, and He delights in making us sharers in His light, love, life, and happiness. Let our minds and hearts be ever open to Him. He will never fail us—Father, Friend, and Lover of our souls. And how He descends from the majesty of His glory, bending to our lowliness, to be ever in our midst, and close to us, one by one, in His wondrous, hidden, sacramental life. How readily, fully, constantly we ought to respond to such vast love! Love is preference. Therefore let us voluntarily choose Our Lord God as the Infinite Good and the only Good, "of Him, by Him, and in Him" being all other good things in nature, grace, and glory. This will indeed be soul-satisfying. And with it we may say again and again with the Apostle, "All things are yours." Who loves and enjoys the beauties of nature more than those who ever see them as the pourings around them of wisdom and love divine? And the same of all the wonders of grace and glory, too. And as acts make habits, so by thus seeing, loving, and enjoying the Infinite Good in all the works of His hand we strengthen and develop more and

more the best habit of the divine affective love within our hearts.

*Affective* love, of course, must become *effective*. And thus it is that inner love spurs us on to outer works, and the love of God overflows to the love of our neighbour. In this way the works of daily life, even though in themselves they be small, hidden, and ordinary, are done faithfully and fervently in the spirit of mutual love between the soul and God, and the soul is trained to see the divine love and will in all; nor is it ever seeking for persons, places, and works that would please it naturally, knowing that the great and only reality is in the mutual love within and that externals are but accidentals; but it leaves all arrangements to the divine Lover and Provider, who uses other souls that way and herself this way, and all for His own great ends and the vast needs of souls. When, however, the duties of office, obedience, or charity call for great undertakings, then a loving soul is ever ready to go forth to outer works, God and the soul working together therein. "Thine and mine, dear Lord." God ever the principal Worker, Our Lord ever in our midst, and the Holy Ghost governing us by His gifts and fruits. Thus the contemplative

and active element are ever blending together, the same life of mutual love between God and the soul sustaining both, contemplation moving to action when the right time comes, and action, by ardent love, nourishing contemplation. And so it is when many vast works and immense undertakings have to be seen to and done for the good of our fellow-creatures, whether in the spiritual or temporal order. God works for man and man works for God. God needs man in carrying out His great purposes, and man needs God; for without Him we can do nothing. So it is in all the works of nature and grace. And by this means we are made to depend both on God and on one another. And by this dependence we are moved to the twofold love of God and our neighbour. Thus God loves us and we at once love Him and one another. This is the sweet mutual love between God and His creatures, and the more we have of it the sweeter is life here below, gradually leading us on to the life of everlasting mutual love between God and His creatures, with our dear Lord, our dear Lady, the cherubim, seraphim, and all the bright angels, the glorious saints, and the spirits of the just made perfect in the realms of heavenly bliss.

## IX

### Outer Works and Inner Spirit

THE Apostle tells us that in the Church of God "there are diversities of graces, but the same spirit. And there are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but the same God who worketh all in all."[1] Here we see unity in diversity. Graces, ministries, and operations are manifold. God is rich and overflowing in the things of grace, as He is in those of nature. Mountains, hills, cataracts, rivers, valleys, plains, rocks, verdure, flowers, fruits, sands, and desert, all are placed by Him according to His will and "the spirit of God hath filled the whole world."[2] So it is in the order of grace. God's gifts to men are various and marvellous. Some have acute and penetrating minds, others tender and loving hearts. Some are fitted for abstract science, others for concrete business. The different sexes have their different gifts, all for the benefit of the Church, the world, society, and home.

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 4. [2] Wis. i. 7.

Philosophy, history, poetry, eloquence, art, government, invention and a thousand other working abilities are God's gifts to His creatures here below, and with these intellectual, moral, and spiritual virtues, leading men to holiness, sanctity, and perfection, according to the many states of life arranged by Divine Providence both for the spiritual and temporal order of the world.

As in nature, so in grace, all have to stand, each in his place and order, fulfilling the divine will. For "the Lord is just in all His ways, and holy in all His works."[1] One of us He places here and another there. To one He gives five, to another ten, and to others one or two talents. Some are called to noble works, having both abilities and opportunities thereto. Others are destined to humble and hidden life, just as it is in nature:

*Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,*
*And waste its sweetness on the desert air.*

Some abound in active works in the Church, others are but little used. But "the Lord knoweth who are His."[2] *Those also serve who only stand and wait.* Externals are but accidentals. "It is the spirit that

[1] Ps. cxliv. 17. [2] 2 Tim. ii. 19.

giveth life"[1] that animates each one in his place and work, the same God working all in all. And a small work with much inner spirit and love is more meritorious than a great work with little love; because there is more of the spirit of God within it. "All these, one and the same spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as He will."[2]

It would be much to our own spiritual good and advancement, as also for the benefit of communities, if all thoroughly well understood and realised this point of doctrine, that the inner spirit it is that really decides the supernatural worth and merit of our actions. Indeed, have we not the Apostle enumerating the very grandest externals, and yet declaring to us that without the inner unitive love we are as "a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal"? Not adverting to this, even religious men are found with over-much natural activity, striving for name, fame, office, position, and

*Tired of knocking at preferment's door.*

Were it not better to remember that all Religious and priests are consecrated souls, and their one business is to live in contact with the spirit of God, working in union

[1] John vi. 64. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 11.

with Our Lord, that His will may be done on earth, as it is in heaven?

*The sweetest lives are those to duty wed,*
*Whose deeds, both great and small,*
*Are close-knit strands of one unbroken thread,*
*Where love ennobles all.*

But so it is. Nature and grace move their own ways. Nature is perpetually active, looking to its own pleasure and passing interests, anxious for name, place, power, influence, and the management of things around it. Maybe the spiritual eye is not yet sufficiently opened. For want of self-training souls look at things in their natural light instead of the light of God. And acts make habits. Thus it is that the activities of nature become impediments to the governance of grace. And the old truth presses us here, that for the development of perfect love to God we *must* have a voluntary and consistent exercise of prayer and mortification. If, therefore, those who abound in outer works for the benefit of others are not men of prayer and mortification, they may indeed point out the good ways to others by their words, and yet, as sign-posts on the road, not advance along the way themselves.

From this we see what an important part in the training of religious men and Church students the formation of the interior spirit ought to be.

The work of souls is our blessed Lord's own work. He is ever the principal worker. But He wills that His priests work with Him.

*Volo Pater, ut ubi ego sum, illic sit et minister Meus.*

As in nature, so in grace, God uses the agency of His creatures in working for others. Thus the Church's sacramental system and Our Lord's own sacramental presence come to us from Our Lord through His priests. What a man of God, therefore, a priest ought to be! How united with Our Lord! What a man of prayer! What a man of detachment and mortification, in order to ensure the life of mutual love and mutual working between Our Lord and His priest! But all this means interior spirit. Else how soon we come to the sounding brass and tinkling cymbal!

Truly we want inner union and love with God, both in prayer and action. How readily and lovingly we ought to go to our daily mental prayer, as those who love one another delight to be together, and give themselves to mutual converse and enjoyment. What a

pleasure and privilege it should ever be to us to assist at the Holy Mass whenever we can, for the Mass ever means Our Lord coming to us and we going to Him, and it ever means the pourings of Our Lord's precious blood upon our souls, with the remission of our many sins we daily strive to conquer:[1] for "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."[2] And "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."[3] And further, how we ought to train ourselves to the *habit* of constant mental and affective prayer; seeing the divine presence around, above, within us, being impressed with the divine beauty and loveliness in the works both of nature and grace; going frequently to Our Lord's sacramental presence, as the divine Lover, whose delights are to be with the children of men: remembering, too, the bright angelic spirits before the throne of our hidden Lord—*Tibi cherubim et seraphim.* "How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts; my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord."[4] Thus lingering often before the hidden presence, listening to Our Lord's sweet voice and giving

[1] In remissionem eorum quæ a nobis quotidie committuntur peccatorum. Conc. Trid. s. 22, c. 1.
[2] 1 John i. 7. [3] Ibid. ii. 2. [4] Ps. lxxxiii. 1.

Him the preference of our hearts before all other creatures, and all this gradually strengthening into habit—loving thus to engage ourselves—and so enjoying what is indeed the *spirit* of prayer—the love of it from the heart—preferring "the attendance on God before all external things."[1]

Then it is that spirit and love come into our actions as well as our prayer. And oh! how desirable and enjoyable it is to find the vivifying presence of the spirit of God prompting, sustaining, enlivening and sweetening all the ordinary works of daily life![2]

Here is the difference between a man of God and one who lives and works in the human spirit. And so it must be. If we are not under the governance of the spirit of God we are necessarily led by the human spirit. And this, with its miseries, imperfections, and shortcomings, is bound to come out in the works and ways of daily life. Alas! how abundantly we witness it in the ways of the world! All the awful crimes against God and man perpetually rising from earth to heaven are the offspring of the human spirit. But the spirit of God governs the Church since the day of Pentecost, and

[1] Imit. iii. 53.
[2] Qui Spiritu Dei aguntur ii sunt filii Dei. Rom. viii. 14.

the Church governs the nations in their Faith, and every one of us who live in submission to her voice. Yet even children of the Church, faithful and united as they are under the good spirit in things of Faith, are not so when it comes to divine charity and the many virtues proper to their state. "Alas, the old man is still alive within me," as the author of the "Imitation" says. And the will and the heart, with their many workings, instead of engaging themselves with the life of divine love, are found to be overabounding in their own natural activities, and thus the work of our spiritual progress is continually intercepted and interfered with, while habits of natural activity and idle gratification strengthen and develop from constant exercise and indulgence.

Here we see again and again the need of self-training and true discipline of soul. To what purpose, indeed, do we enjoy the inward life of grace and love if we do not move and work by this divine principle? Thus the Apostle says, "If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit."[1] If we enjoy the infused virtues of faith and love, certainly it is that we may work the works of faith and love, otherwise it comes to the

[1]Gal. v. 25.

possession of talents and the neglect of using them. Thus philosophy says, *Quælibet res est propter suam operationem.* How earnestly every consecrated soul, whether in the Religious or priestly life, should strive to grasp and assimilate these principles that concern so closely the formation and perfection at once of nature and grace. Our Lord's words fall upon us: "If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them."[1] Yet how often the good seed falls but does not sink in! How is it that even cultured and chosen souls hear the best things—things that concern their inmost life and happiness—like them, approve of them, believe them, commend them, and then let them go? They have not yet learned to train themselves in the way of God. "Show me, O Lord, Thy ways, and teach me Thy paths."[2] They need a clear ideal of spiritual life, a constant working thereto, and the courage and resolution to be loyal to their highest convictions. All this implies the governance of the spirit of God, but to attain to it we must leave our hold of lesser things, for "unless a man be at liberty from things created he can not freely attend to things divine."[3]

[1]John xiii. 17. [2]Ps. xxiv. 4. [3]Imit. iii.

"A man of the centre" must be a detached man. Living and working in the union of mutual love with God, his heart is where his treasure is, and in the light of God he sees all other things here below. By practice and inner training external works flow from the spirit within. And all this means the secure and meritorious progress of the soul to its ultimate end.

## X

## The Liturgical Spirit

THE true, divine, liturgical spirit ever implies the blending of the interior and exterior homage of the soul to God—the inmost love of the heart for the Infinitely Great, Good, and Beautiful, energising fully, reverently, devoutly, joyously, in all the prayers, praises, and ceremonies rising from earth to heaven in the Mass and the Divine Offices of the Church, in testimony of the supreme dominion of God over all His creatures, and of the honour, love, worship, obedience, and humble and heartfelt service we owe Him.

As Our Lord God is the Fountain of all goodness in nature and grace, so He has willed that we should not be left to our own little devices and resources in the ways of prayer and praise. Thus the marvellous invention of His love in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar places Him at once in the midst of His creatures, ever forming the centre of all our worship in the Catholic Church.

And if we do but awaken our faith in this divine mystery, do we not at once find herein the direct means of nourishing our inner life of love with Our Lord God, which is the best part of the interior homage of our soul, that has to give spirit, energy, and sweetness to all our external works? For as we say again and again, this inner life is the mutual love between the soul and God. And here let us turn to the exquisite teaching of the Angelic Doctor. Speaking of the theological virtue of charity, he says that it "not only signifies the love of God, but also friendship with Him, which implies mutual love and mutual communication; as the Apostle says, "He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him." And this friendship of man with God, which is a certain familiar conversation with Him, is begun here below by grace and is perfected hereafter in glory.[1]

All this inner life of mutual love being premised, we understand that it has to be the

[1]Caritas non solum significat amorem Dei, sed etiam amicitiam quandam ad Ipsum; quæ quidem super amorem addit mutuam redamationem cum quadam communicatione mutua. Et quod hoc ad caritatem pertineat, potet per id quod dicitur 1 Jo. iv, "Qui manet in caritate in Deo manet, et Deus in eo." Hæc autem societas hominis ad Deum, quæ est quædam familiaris conversatio cum Ipso, inchoatur quidem hic per gratiam, perficietur autem in futuro per gloriam. 1. 2. Q. 65. A. 5.

living soul and principle of all our outward acts of prayer and praise, that the Divine Spirit may energise in the entire "Opus Dei"; and seeing, too, that the children of God must be led by the spirit of God.[1]

The instinct of every child of the Church living by faith and love will be to go before all the other works of the day to Our Lord's own great act of oblation in the Mass, wherein He offers Himself at all the hours of day and night in the different countries of the world for God's own great ends and the vast needs of souls. This is ever the greatest act on earth, perpetually going on, and all the priests and the faithful of the world offer it together in union with Our Lord. Let all the children of the Church realise this well, that they offer the Mass together with the priests of the Church and with Our Lord Himself; and if they like, as they well may, to say the words of the Mass with the priest, they may truly be said to say Mass themselves. If they prefer to assist silently at the Holy Sacrifice, there is always large liberty of spirit for this in so many different ways, whether by recalling the four great ends for which the sacrifice is offered, and forming their affections and petitions

[1] Rom. viii. 14.

accordingly, or by kneeling under the shadow of the cross and sheltering their miseries under Our Lord's merits and mercies.

It is much according to the liturgical spirit to enter into the meaning of every word that is said and every ceremony that is used in the Mass and in all the Divine Offices of the Church. Our life of faith tells us that the word of the Church represent's Our Lord's word to be done: for He is the Head of the Body and all have to move by Him and according to Him.

Ever premising what we say so often, that all our outer acts must be vivified by the inner spirit, and that Our Lord and the soul are in the life of mutual love together, as the Mass begins, will not a loving soul at once say: "Dear Lord, Thine and mine"? How sweet to be thus in such close association with our blessed Lord, He living and working with us and we living and working with Him. And the Mass is His and it is ours! This inner love vastly sustains, enlarges, vivifies, and sweetens the liturgical spirit, for it is truly the life of all—*spiritus est qui vivificat*[1]—and enlightens us to see and understand all—*illuminatos oculos cordis vestri.*[2] *In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiri-*

[1] John vi. 64. [2] Eph. i. 18.

*tus Sancti.* "Of Him and by Him and in Him are all things.[1] The Holy Sacrifice is emphatically the work of the eternal Trinity. Let it proceed, therefore, in the name of God. It is no human work. But God wills that men work with Him, as in nature, so in grace. So let all be according to God, not according to man. What must be our reverence, love, and devotion? *Introibo ad altare Dei.* It is to God's altar that we go. This is His own divine work, yet we work with Him. It is all the life of mutual love, He and we forever together. And a loving soul soon finds divine meaning in every verse. How quickly is such a one caught up with a word or two passing between the Church and her Lord—*Deus Tu conversus vivificabis nos.* Here is Our Lord God turning to us—and why? To vivify us with His spirit. *Ostende nobis Domine misericordiam Tuam.* Here again and again are the mutual workings and dealings between Our Lord and the soul. *Aufer a nobis, Domine, cunctas iniquitates nostras, ut ad Sancta Sanctorum puris Tibi mentibus.* Here we seek the purification of the soul in Our Lord's merits before entering the Holy of Holies. How we are reminded that all our

[1] Rom. xi. 36.

externals have to be referred to the inner life of the soul, the main work of our perfection constantly proceeding.

Now sounds the "Introit" on our ears. This differs morning by morning according to the seasons and festivals of the year—either God speaking to us or we to Him. How frequently the words are exactly fitting to our souls, according to our common needs or the special intention for which we are offering the Sacrifice.

*Ad Te levavi animam meam—Deus meus in Te confido. Vias Tuas Domine demonstra mihi, et semitas Tuas edoce me.* Thus on the first Sunday of Advent we lift our souls to God in full confidence, God and the soul ever together, and in view to progress in His ways. *Expecta Dominum viriliter age, et confortetur cor tuam, et sustine Dominum.* Wait Our Lord's time, but do manfully. Be a doer, not merely a hearer. And wait for Our Lord. *Caritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per Spiritum Sanctum qui datus est nobis.* Here is the work of the Holy Ghost in the souls of men—the diffusion of His own inner life within us—that He and we may ever live and work together, *per caritatem.* Yet in this life of mutual love our faults are constant—and thus the daily

prayer for mercy, "Kyrie eleison": seeing that "His mercy is over all His works."

"Love, contrition, and the Mass" now easily strike upon the soul, as *per se purificantes,* and the faults and fears of nature are quickly lost in the strength of love, like mould on metal is lost in fire. And thus, with full confidence in the divine beauty, power, and goodness, and Our Lord's abounding merits, the soul bursts forth into the "Gloria in excelsis Deo," praising the divine greatness and loveliness with all heaven and earth, and the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Thus purified in the precious merits of Our Lord, and going to God wholly through Him, as He says, "No man cometh to the Father but by Me," in the "Collects" we break into humble petitions for the Church, the world, and ourselves. *Excita Domine potentiam Tuam. Excita Domine corda nostra.* Here we see God and man, as always, working together, God loving to work with us and we loving to work with Him. *Ut qui sine Te esse non possumus, secundum Te vivere voleamus.* Every single prayer of the Church bespeaks to us this mutual working between God and man, and thus becomes the direct means of nourishing within us the inner life

of mutual love. The "Epistle" is as a letter of love from the Divine Lover to the loving soul, ever speaking sweet words of help and comfort. The versicles that follow are as dartings of love between Our Lord and ourselves: sometimes He speaking, sometimes we. The "Gospel" is Our Lord's own direct word to the souls of men: sometimes adapting Himself to our own modes of speech by the analogies of nature, as in the parables, ever so impressive, so unanswerable: at other times plainly rebuking the follies of mankind, as when addressing the scribes and pharisees; or appealing to the tenderest instincts of our nature, as when weeping over Jerusalem, beseeching imploringly His ungrateful children. But in whatever way Our Lord speaks, His every word is an effluence of eternal wisdom, falling as good seed upon our souls, implanting within us His gifts of truth and love divine. Are we as good ground, well kept and cultivated, with all corresponding conditions to His work within us?

At the "Credo" we remember that faith is light divine within us, enlightening our path all along the journey of life here below. How manfully Athanasius, Basil, Gregory, Ambrose, and Leo fought for the Nicene

faith. The Church has handed it down, and day by day we profess it.

The "Offertory" presents Our Lord's oblation, and ours in union with Him. All together, priests and people, in union with Our Lord, make the oblation: for through Our Lord alone we find our way to God. We may here recall the four great ends for which the sacrifice is offered, and the vast needs of souls throughout the Church and world, offering for all or each, as the case may be, the merits of our divine Lord here and on all the altars throughout the world: in union with Himself, our blessed Lady, the cherubim and seraphim, all the angelic choirs, all the saints of the Church triumphant, and the whole Church suffering and militant. In this full union we present the prayers of the "Secreta," and all through Our Lord, *per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum.* And well now, at the "Preface," may Holy Mother Church invite us to lift up our hearts, "Sursum corda," seeing that we are now rather in the union of the unseen world than engaged with things of earth. And as enjoying such divine gifts, we may well be reminded of the thanks due to the divine Giver: *Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro.* Still keeping our hearts and affec-

tions upward, as the "Preface" proceeds, in the full union of heaven and earth, we praise, adore, and thank the Holy Trinity, the Eternal Father, beginning and end of all, the loving Son, through whom we go to God, and the life-giving and sanctifying Spirit of us all—the dear angels, cherubim and seraphim always uniting with us in their praise and love. We may notice in the "Ordinary Preface" how it is *through Our Lord,* the head of angels and men, that the angels praise the divine majesty—*per Quem Majestatem Tuam laudant Angeli, adorant Dominationes, tremunt Potestates, . . . ac beata seraphim.* And with all these blessed spirits we pray that we may be allowed to join our humble voices. *Cum quibus et nostras voces ut admitti jubeas deprecamur.* Thus all angels and men go to God together through our blessed Lord. How truly worthy of the infinite majesty is such divine worship. And how delightful it becomes day by day to realise more and more the beauty and the nearness of the unseen world around us, and especially during the oblation of the divine sacrifice. And let us not forget how this is proceeding night and day in the different countries of the world, and if the sins of men are forever rising from earth to heaven,

there are the infinite merits of Our Lord for ever rising also, and the united homage of heaven and earth in sweet association with Him.

At the "Canon" of the Mass we are all in special union together, priests and people; yea, angels and saints, too, and all again *through* our blessed Lord, He leading us onward, to whom all power in heaven and earth has been given. Thus observe the plural numbers—*rogamus, offerimus*—reminding us of our close union all together, in and with which we intercede now for the Church, the Pontiff, the bishops, and all the faithful throughout the world. At the "Memento" of the living we are more especially reminded of the priest and people all offering the Sacrifice together. "Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants, men and women, and of all here present," *pro quibus Tibi offerimus, vel qui Tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis, pro se, suisque omnibus.* And at the "Communicantes" we associate ourselves still more closely with our blessed Lord, our blessed Lady, the apostles, martyrs, and all the saints, through whose merits and prayers we ask to be defended and protected. We may well believe that at the "Consecration" the sanctuary fills with angels, to give hon-

our and homage to the Lord of angels and men. *Tibi omnes angeli. Tibi cherubim et seraphim.* As they are all ministering spirits, we can not conceive any time when they would more swiftly gather together than the moment of consecration in the Mass, when their Lord incarnate becomes at once priest and victim for love of God and men. For truly "where the King is, there is the court." And how fitting it seems that when the Lord of heaven and earth hides and humbles His divine loveliness for love of the souls of men, the highest of the angelic choirs should delight in surrounding Him with the light and love of their heavenly bliss; so that while He descends so low for love of us, He may rise to the headship of power for love of them: for so He says, "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth." Let us shelter ourselves under Our Lord's merits, and let His precious blood pour over our souls; for "He is the propitiation for our sins." With love, contrition, and the Mass let our souls be purified, and let us renew the oblation for God's own great ends and the vast needs of souls. Hence the "Unde et memores." The Church triumphant, suffering, and militant are all together between the "Elevation" and the "Pater

noster," and truly Our Lord loves to be surrounded with His saints and loving souls and to send His purifying streams through the Church on earth, and on to the suffering souls in purgatory, for it is through Him that we all go to God—*Per Quem hæc omnia, Domine semper bona creas, vivificas, et præstas nobis.* Thus we come to the "Pater noster." And the whole united Church, in heaven, purgatory, and earth, may delight in this sweet relationship, for Our Lord God is truly Father, Friend, and Lover of us all. How sweetly the mutual love between Our Lord and ourselves and one another appears in every word of Our Lord's prayer. *Our* Father, not *my* Father, that we may all live in mutual love with Our Lord and one another. May Our Lord God be hallowed, honoured, and loved by us all. May He reign in the hearts of us all. May our works follow our love, by doing His will here as it is done in heaven. May God grant us all He sees we need. May He forgive us as we forgive one another. May He give us to overcome all temptation, and may He deliver us from every evil. "Pax Domini," may the peace of Our Lord be ever with us. "Agnus Dei," Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Again

we are reminded of Our Lord as the propitiation for our sins and of the purifying power of His merits on our souls. Thus day by day we find the remedy for our lesser faults. We are not bound to confess them. Love, contrition, and the Mass will suffice to purify our souls. Of this the prayer before the "Communion" reminds us—*Domine Jesu Christe . . . libera me per hoc Sacro sanctum Corpus et Sanguinam Tuum ab omnibus iniquitatibus meis.* Thus purified, Our Lord gives Himself to us in the "Communion" and we give ourselves to Him. And with Him and the whole heavenly court we may unite in intercessory prayer during the remainder of the Mass, when the priest also is offering the petitions of the Church in the "Post-communion" prayers. The "Last Gospel" brings us again to the Word made flesh, the Head of angels and of men: "The first-born of every creature in whom were all things created in heaven, and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers—all things were created by Him, and in Him. And He is before all, and by Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the body, the Church . . . that in all things He may hold the primacy: because in Him it hath well pleased the Father

that all fulness should dwell: and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, both as to the things on earth, and the things that are in heaven."[1]

How infinitely worthy of the Holy Trinity is the oblation of the divine sacrifice of the Mass! Where should we poor creatures of earth be without it? How would the all-pure God endure the world's wickedness were it not that the Lamb of God is ever in the midst of us? And "He is the propitiation for our sins."[2] And if the sins of men for ever rise from earth to heaven, the all-beauteous Son of God, with all the merits and homage of His sacred humanity, surrounded with the heavenly court and countless loving souls of the Church militant, offer in the Mass perpetual praise and love to God, and thus counterbalance the wickedness of the world. How readily, willingly, gratefully, lovingly, should we assist at this greatest act on earth with full-hearted joy and devotion whenever we can do it, delighted to be able worthily to worship and love God and to have our souls cleansed from their daily faults in the purifying streams of Our Lord's precious blood.

Next to the Holy Mass we have to revere

[1] Col. i. 15. [2] 1 John ii. 2.

and love all the Divine Offices of the Church. As the Church represents Our Lord's presence and authority on earth, and as she solemnly prescribes the recitation of the Divine Office to those consecrated to God in the priestly and Religious life, so it is evident that all these additional prayers and praises bespeak the will of God to be done. As, therefore, the Mass is Our Lord's own infinite act of homage, which He offers for us as the representative Man, so the Divine Office is the Church's ceaseless homage to God. And God wills that we should pay this to Him with sweet accord of heart and lips—*ut hoc versetur in corde, quod profertur in ore*[1]—ever remembering that in all our outer works we must have the right spirit within, lest we be as "a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."

How much the true inner life of mutual love between the soul and God will help us to enjoy and understand the meaning both of the inspired Word and of all the prayers, anthems, and lessons of the Divine Office, as it is indeed the key to all holy reading and working! How could it be otherwise, seeing that all spiritual thinking and living are between God and man? In the words of Scripture or the Church's offices, either God

[1]St. Aug. in Regula.

speaks to us or we to Him. If we have trained ourselves to think of Him, love Him above all, speak to Him, live and work with Him, how easily all are turned to the workings of love between God and men. This inner spirit it is that can alone rightly and worthily awaken and sustain the soul's interest, delight, yea, and enthusiasm, too, in all the externals of the Church's liturgy, offices, and devotions.

All this being premised, it is altogether according to the liturgical spirit to enter fully into the reverent recitation and rendering of all the Church's words, said or sung, in her offices, and, further, to follow the sacred meaning of them all. If the words, musical notes, and ceremonies are prescribed and approved by apostolic authority, may we not and should we not feel that every one of them, even to the least, bring us the divine will to be loved and done, and therefore that to the faithful doing of each of them, one by one, a grace is attached? The life of faith and love tells us all this. And if our progress to the end of perfect love be the real thing it should be, how can we reconcile ourselves to continual losses on the way, arising from neglect and carelessness in doing well what has to be done?

In the old law God required a very faithful service from His chosen people, both as to the outer forms and ceremonies of religion, as also to the right spirit within. "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but that thou fear Him, and walk in His ways, and love Him, and serve Him with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and keep His commandments and His ceremonies, that it may be well with thee? Take heed, and beware, lest at any time thou forget the Lord thy God and neglect His commandments, and judgments, and ceremonies. Keep, therefore, and do the things which the Lord God hath commanded. You shall not go aside, neither to the right hand, nor to the left hand."[1] In order to fulfil well these sacred works in all their details, the inner spirit will move us firstly to the good pronunciation of all the words and syllables. If syllables are not pronounced, words are not pronounced; and if the words are not said, the duty is neglected. Is there not a special charm in perfect pronunciation? Those of appreciative natures know it. Ask the elocutionists and the rhetoricians and the orators and the actresses. Demosthenes attests it. All cultured speakers attend to it. Vocal-

[1]Deut. x. 12; viii. 11; v. 32.

ists excel in it. In singing or reciting the divine praises in choir all should train themselves to perfect pronunciation of the words and syllables. For here is the *opus Dei,* which ought to be *opus perfectum.* And let it ever be said, the inner spirit of love should vivify the outer sound of words and song. It is the spirit that gives life; and the inner heart is what God chiefly commands. Thus the spirit it is that moves to the perfect work. And thus it is that those whose outer works are so imperfect are seen so deficient in the inner life of love with God. *Spiritus est qui vivificat.*[1] This want of spirit accounts for long-standing, habitual faults and failings in the external rendering of the Church's choral offices, such as excessive rapidity in pronunciation, when it becomes evident that syllables, and therefore words, are not said, a habit that easily becomes inveterate, more especially in the "Secreta" of the Mass and the Divine Office. And here how clearly the constant repetition of the act forms the habit! Quickness soon passes into hurry, and hurry into irreverence, and irreverence into disedification, with loss at once of spirit and discipline. Younger ones pick up the ways of their elders. And thus

[1] John vi. 64.

the spirit of a community deteriorates: and the Divine Offices that should so engage the heart's best love, and that might so easily lead on loving souls to contemplative prayer, are gone through in a customable way, with little or no relish—far, indeed, from the enjoyment of which Hilton speaks when he says that "every word is sounded savourly, sweetly, and delectably, with full accord of mouth and heart."[1]

St. Bernard was apparently anxious about all such things among those whom he governed. "Serve Our Lord reverently," he says, "not indolently or heedlessly, not neglecting words and syllables, but reciting vigorously and effectively."[2]

But here, as in all other things, *operatio sequitur esse*. From careless natures careless operations follow. And thus if effects are to be rectified the causes must be rectified. We are not to be governed by nature, but we are to govern nature by grace. "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good."[3]

[1] Scale of perf. iii. 12.

[2] Reverenter et alacriter Domino assistetis—non pigri, non somnolenti, non oscitantes, non parcentes vocibus—non præcidentes verba dimidia, non integra transilientes, non fractis et remissis vocibus—sed sonitu et affectu voces Sancti Spiritus depromentes. St. Bern. Serm. xlvii. in Cant. viii.

[3] Rom. xii. 21.

Further, it is according to the liturgical spirit, not only to say the words well, but to enter into the meaning of what is said. Here, again, so much depends upon the inner spirit, as also upon the cultivation and appreciation of individual souls. It is certain, as St. Augustine says, that love is light.[1] St. Paul also affirms it: "Being rooted and founded in charity, you may be able to understand."[2] And Cardinal Bona: "Love is a fire burning and shining. When it burns in the will, it shines in the understanding."[3] The inner habit of love between the soul and God quickly sends its light upon the inspired Word and the writings of the saints. And it is natural to a loving soul to see in all the pages of Holy Writ and holy writings either God speaking to us or we speaking to Him; and this at once bespeaks the life of mutual love between the soul and God. Thus the lives of all the saints in the Second Nocturns show us the mutual workings between them and the spirit of God, declaring to us holiness in the concrete: while the Homilies of the Holy Fathers give us holiness in the abstract. And both one and the other are needful. We want both

[1]Caritas est lux. Epist. cxl. ad Honorat.
[2]Eph. iii. 17. [3]Via Comp. c. ix.

principles and practice. We have first to *know* the things of God, then *do* them. The saints were eminently *doers* of the Word.

It is well admitted that the nearer souls approach to God in the life of mutual love, the more they incline to simplicity, as contrasted with multiplicity. Thus the "Imitation": "He to whom all things are one; who draws all things to one; who sees all things in one, may be steady in heart and peaceably repose in God. O truth, my God, make me one with Thee in everlasting love. Let all teachers hold their peace. Speak Thou alone to me."[1]

And thus after enjoying for long years the literal meaning of the verses, anthems, and lessons of the Office, it may easily happen to many souls having, as a poet says, "the heavenward bent," to be fully satisfied with a sense of the divine presence and a realisation of this as the one great and only reality, seeing that all things else come and go and pass away, thus finding in the Word of God and the Church's words and holy writings and the lives of the saints the continual effluences of light and love divine, remembering, as the Apostle says, "All things

[1] Imit. i. 3.

are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's,"[1] He overflowing of His riches into our souls, who is "above all, and through all, and in us all."[2] *Ut impleamini in omnem plenitudinem Dei.*[3] Yet all this with much liberty of spirit, for the Spirit breatheth where He willeth, and while He Himself is the all-sufficient, ever-satisfying life of our souls, "of whom, and by whom, and in whom are all things,"[4] yet owing to the constant weakness of our nature, we often fail in attention to His presence and workings, and so have to return to the more ordinary ways both of mental and vocal prayer. Still, means of inner purification are always at hand in love, contrition, and the Mass. Thus from one of the old Fathers of the Desert, the Abbot Pynulphius: "Besides the grace of Baptism and martyrdom, charity has the same power of freeing us from our sins." As St. Peter says: "Charity covereth a multitude of sins."[5] And Our Lord God, speaking by the prophet: "I am He that blotteth out thy iniquities for My own sake; and I will not remember thy sins."[6] In this way, if we deflect through weakness, the spirit quickly recovers through love; and "the

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 22. [3] Eph. iii. 19. [5] Cassian Conf. xix. c. viii.
[2] Eph. iv. 6. [4] Rom. xi. 36. [6] Is. xliii. 25.

blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."[1] And as the habitual aspiration of the loving soul is to be going onward to God, so by divine instinct it knows that although it fail so frequently, yet it has as frequently to return to the divine presence and working; and its habitual love of God above all things brings it to habitual union with Him, and the union of all its powers in Him; so that in the memory it remembers Him; in the intellect it knows Him, growing more and more in this divine knowledge; in the will it loves Him, growing more and more in the divine love; and in all its other powers of soul and body it serves Him according to the divine will. And as in relation to this union all passing things are accidental, so whatever has to be done, and come what may, the loving soul has its thoughts and affections ever engaged with the divine object rather than with the things themselves. All this is in accordance with the teaching of the Angelic Doctor, in his treatment *de Oratione,* where he tells us that there is a threefold attention in prayer: 1. To the words, saying them correctly. 2. To the sense of the words, following their meaning. 3. To God, who is the end of all

[1] 1 John i. 7.

prayer, and so engaging at times is this attention (continues the holy doctor) that the soul may lose sight of all other things, while the spirit is intent on God.[1]

[1]Quandoque in tantum abundat hæc intentio, qua mens fertur in Deum, ut etiam aliorum omnium mens obliviscatur ut dicit Hugo de St. Vict. (de modo Oren. c. ii.). 2. 2. Q. 83, Art. 13.

## XI

## The Apostolic Spirit

ALL the children of the Church may and should cultivate the apostolic spirit, which is a natural result of the love of God above all things overflowing in love to our neighbour. God has so planned that He gives us His good things through the agency of one another, He Himself being ever the First Cause and we working with Him, and this both in the order of nature and grace. How naturally, therefore, if we live and work in union with Our Lord God, shall we be moved, loving Him above all things, to wish that all others may love Him in the same way. And this is the beginning of the apostolic spirit—love for souls—and the desire to help them, directly or indirectly, toward the knowledge, love, and service of God, thus loving others as we love ourselves; and as we love ourselves in the highest way by loving God and giving ourselves to His knowledge, love, and service more and more, so we love our neighbour as we love ourselves when we desire that he also should

know, love, and serve God in like manner, and when we do what we are able to help him to this end.[1]

Our Lord God became incarnate for love of the souls of men. His sacred passion and death were for them. The whole organisation of the Catholic Church is for the carrying on the work of His redemption, by transmitting His truth and grace to the nations till the end of time. The Church's living voice and authority are for keeping men's minds and wills in the way of God during the course of their life here below. The sacraments of the Church are for giving us constant supplies of grace day by day, lest nature in her weakness should lead us astray. The living Word of God is for sowing again and again the good seed within our souls. Our Lord's sacramental and sacrificial life is ever in our midst, that we may live by Him and go to God through Him. Our blessed Lady, the angels and the saints are ever near to help us. All the ministrations of the Church throughout the world, the governance of the Apostolic See, the hierarchy of bishops, the priesthood, the Religious Orders, congregations and institutions, the writings of the Fathers, doctors,

[1]From St. Aug. de doct. Christiana. Lib. i. v. xxii.

and saints, the schools and science of the Church, her liturgy and offices, her music and devotions, her parish visitations, confraternities, clubs, and associations, the training of her children, all these and much more are Our Lord's work and the Church's work for the souls of men. It is the apostolic spirit ever living and working in our midst.

Well, then, may all children of the Church have their share in her spirit. The love of souls, of their salvation and well-being is part of the love of God and of our neighbour. First and foremost, those who are the successors of the apostles themselves, the bishops and priests of the Church, have to be truly apostolic men, men of God, "sanctified and profitable to the Lord, rightly handling the word of truth . . . that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work."[1] All this presupposes the governance of the spirit of God; and truly it is part of the proper training of all preparing for the priestly life, wherein souls are associated with Our Lord in His everlasting priesthood and consecrated for life to His love and service—to school themselves by self-discipline to the principles of grace, by means of which

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 21-15; iii. 17.

the natural man may be duly governed. Here we come to the conflict between nature and grace, between the spirit of God and the human spirit, between self-love and divine love. The whole work of a spiritual life is the bringing of the natural man into subordination to the spirit of God, that he may live and work by the principle of divine charity instead of by his own natural love; thus little by little subduing nature to grace, till both go hand in hand together in the way of God. Then it is that such a one is truly called and is indeed a man of God, because subdued to God and governed in his thoughts, words, and works by the spirit of God. Then, as St. Paul says, he is "furnished to every good work," because the spirit of God works in him and gives him abundantly of His gifts and fruits, and is therefore able to use him as a fit instrument in saving and sanctifying the souls of others. The prophets of old, the apostles, and saints were all men of God. So likewise bishops and priests represent Our Lord's presence and authority among the souls of men. They share Our Lord's priesthood. It is through His priests that He gives Himself to men—that He baptizes, absolves, consecrates, offers Himself in sacrifice and communicates

His truth and grace to the world. Seeing, therefore, that Our Lord is ever the chief agent in the realm of grace, in the sacramental system, in the work of His Church, but that He wills His priests to work with Him,[1] how close ought they to be in contact with the hand that uses them. Our Lord and His priest ever living together in the life of mutual love—the sanctuary their home—Our Lord ever there with priest and people. He with us and we with Him. He thinking of us and we of Him. He working with us and we with Him. Day by day Our Lord and His priest offer sacrifice together—give absolution, give communion, baptize, preach the Word of God, visit the sick together. "Thine and mine, dear Lord," might not the priest say in the midst of all these sacred works? This it is—the mutual living and working together that bespeaks the man of God. As Our Lord says, "If any man minister to Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there also shall My minister be."[2] "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me."[3] As the Apostle says, "That the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work."[4]

[1]Volo Pater ut ubi Ego sum, illic sit et minister Meus.
[2]John xii. 26. [3]Id. xvii. 24. [4]2 Tim. iii. 17.

All this clearly appertains to the interior life and the contemplative element and implies a certain development of the habit of divine charity within the soul, whereby the heart's preference and inmost love are given above all to God and divine things. But is not all this proper to every consecrated soul, whether in the priestly or the Religious life? Wherein will be found our consecration if we are forever giving our thoughts and affections to the accidental externals of our natural activity? And acts make habits. And lower habits shut out higher ones. We must train ourselves from the beginning of our Religious and priestly career. We must voluntarily choose Our Lord God above all at the outset of our conversion. And year by year, at every new stage, at every retreat, every anniversary, on all the great festivals, at every time of exposition, yea, and why not at every Mass and mental prayer?—renew again and again our consecration and our resolution to be "all for God," seizing upon the principle of divine charity within us and resolving to live and work by it in all the works of daily life, in union with our divine Lord, our blessed Lady, the angels, the saints, and all the living Church, thus setting ourselves on the one great reality and sac-

rificing lesser things that are not subject to the perfect law, neither *can* they be. Training ourselves thus in the higher principle, it will gradually form into habit; and higher attachments loosen those that are lower. As the Apostle says: "Walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."[1] Then to the loving soul comes the divine Lover. As Our Lord says, "We will come to him, and make our abode with him."[2] Thus is the man of God formed, living and working as a true priest, in union with Our Lord, spreading the "odour of life unto life" around him: not being drawn down by creatures, but drawing them upward to God. "Placed midway," says the Angelic Doctor, "between God and men; receiving from God in contemplation, giving to the people by action."[3]

As philosophy tells us that the operations of a being follow its nature, so a true man of God works among the people the works of God; and by the same law one not yet reformed according to God, and not yet under the governance of the spirit of God, yet withal having good natural powers, will be found working according to his own natural activ-

[1] Gal. v. 16. [2] John xiv. 23.

[3] Utpote qui medii sunt inter Deum et plebem, etc. 3 Sent. D. 35. A. 3-q. 3.

ities. Truly in the realm of grace, in things appertaining to faith, hope, charity, and the supernatural order, souls want the divine governance. They get it, indeed, through the science of the Church, but the human spirit easily mixes and mingles with divine things, unless nature be in due subordination to grace. Thus the Apostle, "What man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him? So the things that are of God no man knoweth, but the spirit of God. The spiritual man judgeth all things; and he himself is judged by no man."[1] We have but to look at the long history of the Church these eighteen centuries to see how lamentably the human spirit brings its miseries into the Church's divinest workings, even to the defeating of the divine spirit. See how Arianism infected the Church's very life. And all the heresies are the offspring of the human spirit, refusing subjection to the spirit of God. So it is in the moral and spiritual orders. The natural man is far nowadays from subdued to the spirit of God. Not living and working by the principle of divine love under the governance of the Holy Ghost, he is necessarily on the lower line of his own natural activi-

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 11, 15.

ties; and if the higher love be not his moving power, the lower love will be. Thus it is that disorders come into sacred works; that imperfections and even habitual faults, unruly ways, and so many shortcomings are apparent both in public and private duties. We are taught that perfection is in our ordinary actions, *viz.*, in doing them well, and with the right spirit within. This is just what is wanting. Things are not well done. Punctuality is not seen to. A way of hurrying through things is ever observable, not excepting even the Mass and the Divine Offices. An act is only once done. How sad not to do it well. If perfection is in ordinary actions, they should be the constant study of our life. Hence the saying, *Age quod agis*—what you are doing, that attend to, and do it well. Let words be pronounced—let ceremonies be reverent. Let the Mass be ever in the first place, as the greatest act on earth. Let cleanliness reign in the sanctuary, and above all in the tabernacle, and all the sacred vessels. Let every movement around the altar bespeak faith in the presence of Our Lord. If we act by principles of grace, it will be so. If it is not so, it is because we act by the ways of unreformed nature. The same will be applicable to all

other details, whether in regard to God, our neighbour, or ourselves.

But the spirit within, it is, that moves us to the due fulfilment and perfection of our outer works. The outside depends on the inside. This is why from the outset of our training we have to live and work from the strong principle of love within, the infused divine charity, that it may gather force from exercise and develop by use, then it becomes, under the spirit of God, the governing power of all our actions. This is the real thing, and without the spirit within we are as "a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal." Thus the Apostle bows his knees to the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would grant us "to be strengthened by His spirit with might unto the inward man."[1]

Many are the children of the Church, not finding a vocation to Holy Orders, yet withal having many gifts of nature and grace, with abilities of communicating knowledge and aid to others, and the spirit of love to God and their neighbour within them. Much may be done by these, both men and women, for God's love and service, the benefit of the Church, and the manifold needs, spiritual

[1]Eph. iii. 16.

and temporal, of our fellow-creatures. The Church needs the co-operation of her faithful children. Many a work can they do in a true apostolic spirit. What services have they rendered to the Church in the long centuries of her bygone history! Was it not largely the faithful laity in Arian times who stood "strong in faith," while bishops and priests were tottering? St. Hilary said of them, "The ears of the people are holier than the lips of the pastors."[1] "Matters have come to this pass," says St. Basil, "that the people leave the churches and assemble in deserts."[2] "Excepting few of the pastors," said St. Gregory Nazienzen, "all temporised."[3] Newman also tells us, "It was the Christian people who, under Providence, were the strength of Athanasius, Hilary, Eusebius of Vercellæ, and other great confessors, who would have failed without them."[4] It must be admitted that the people are vastly what the pastors make them. Of the pastors Our Lord said: "You are the salt of the earth" and the "light of the world." How much the holiness of a man of God tells upon the people! What will they not become if he is as a true *alter Christus* in the midst

[1] Ad Constant. iv.
[2] Epist. ccxlii.
[3] Orat. xxi.
[4] "Arians," Appendix, note v.

of them—if he ever holds up to them, by word and example, the high *ideal* of Christian and priestly life? But if he is as one of themselves, living among them on their own level, keeping and not changing the common habits of the world, where is the savour of the salt and the light divine among the people?

Individual men and women have often talents of the first order, as thinkers, poets, writers, philosophers, journalists, novelists, controversialists, historians, and the rest. What is ever wanted in conjunction with natural talent is the life of divine faith and charity, giving the right spirit within, and the governance of divine discretion. How much may such as these do in the true apostolic spirit for God, the Church, and souls! In the temporal order of things, too, how much may be done directly or indirectly in the same way by good-living, religious-minded, practical, Catholic noblemen, statesmen, professional men, business men, fathers of families, and workmen, who to the daily works of life, each in his own state and calling, join the true inner life of faith and love and thus have a real apostolate in the midst of the world! They are all co-operators with the Church in her apostolic work. Finally, there are countless hidden

and loving souls, having a large share of the Church's living spirit within, engaged with Our Lord, our Lady, and St. Joseph in the hidden and most sacred duties of daily life, many of these duties so divine in their nature, such as those called to Religious, enclosed, and contemplative life, are constantly engaged in—the daily Mass and the Divine Offices of the Church—much mental and vocal prayer, and all this joined to a life of detachment, obedience, and constant self-denial, and mortification. The apostolic spirit may well enter into all such lives by offering the whole course of life, day by day and hour by hour, with all Masses and offices throughout the world, in union with our divine Lord, our blessed Lady, all the angels and saints, and the whole living Church, for God's own great ends and the vast needs of souls, for the conversion of the heathen, heretics, and bad Catholics, for the power of the Church against her persecutors, for the Holy Father, the bishops and priests of the Church, that all may be men of God, labouring with true apostolic spirit for the conversion of the evil and sinful world, for the hundred thousand that are dying day by day, that they may turn to God by faith, hope, love, and contrition, and for all the holy souls in purgatory.

And not only consecrated souls, but all loving souls in every state of life in the world, may co-operate with the Church and share her apostolic spirit, by offering the Mass with priests and people for all these great ends. Let them say the *Angelus* thrice a day, in its three parts, for the conversion of the three great classes of sinners, the heathen, heretics, and bad Catholics: and let them see how each of the three parts is so suitable in its words to each of the three classes—the first part (with its Hail Mary) announcing the incarnation for all unbelievers in the great mystery. The second part, and its Hail Mary, giving our Lady's submission, for the heretics, who do not submit. The third part in like manner declaring Our Lord's presence in our midst, for bad Catholics, who do not go to Him and love Him. Here is the apostolic spirit in hidden and humble life. And by daily Masses, communions, benedictions, Church offices, rosaries, and devotions, souls may be united with the Church's work constantly going on all the world over. Further, many opportunities come, both to men and women, of working directly for the spiritual benefit of their fellow-creatures, in various ways, whether at home or for far distant foreign missions, and this is apostolic work. At

home they may help in classes, and clubs, confraternities, visiting the poor and sick, instructing the ignorant, rescuing children and sinners, helping the dying, assisting in hospitals, aiding priests in their sick calls, attending to the many requirements of Church and sacristy. Nor will it be difficult to develop devotion to foreign missions, since the requirements of missionaries are so numerous. They need money, they want their missions written up in Catholic periodicals. They want young priests educating, and many helping hands for women and children in heathen parts. They need altars, and tabernacles, and sacred vessels, and candlesticks, and altar-cloths, corporals, purificators, many prayer-books, catechisms, missals, spiritual books, historical and controversial works. Those who have means may provide many of these things. Others with needle and thread may do much. Some zealous lay folk whose time is their own even go forth to the foreign mission field and cooperate with priests in the vast spiritual and corporal needs of the people in those distant regions. Let us remember St. Paul's words, "We are God's coadjutors":[1] and let us remember that the great principle of God's love has to be the working power of our life,

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 9.

and has to overflow in love to our neighbour. God's plan is to use His creatures in distributing His gifts. Therefore in saving and sanctifying other souls He wills that His creatures co-operate with Him. All, indeed, have not the same powers, either intellectually, morally, spiritually, or physically. But let all use the powers they have in loving both God and their neighbour. Prayer itself is a great power, because it entreats God, and God lets Himself be entreated. Therefore those who have but small powers of action may have great powers of prayer. Is not the Mass our daily prayer—Our Lord's prayer for us and all mankind? May not all the children of the Church use it, and offer it daily with Our Lord and His priests for the conversion of souls to God? And so with the Divine Offices of the Church, rosaries, stations, and the rest. The Apostle St. James says: "Pray one for another, that you may be saved. The continual prayer of a just man availeth much."[1]

Thus in one way or another all may cultivate the apostolic spirit, either by prayer or action, or both together, according to respective states, abilities, opportunities, and the rules of sound discretion.

[1] James v. 16.

## XII

### Intellectual Culture

IT SEEMS to be very desirable in early years to be impressed with the truth that both our time and faculties are exceedingly limited, and that therefore we must necessarily choose but a few things on which to engage ourselves during life here below, wisely leaving all the rest. None have power to become men of universal knowledge. When trees are loaded with plums it is found that the fruit, from being overabundant, is poor in quality, insipid in taste, and unwholesome if used—the very thing, in fact, to disagree with the system. So also it may be said that if we get into the way of dividing our thoughts upon a vast number of objects, we may possibly acquire a surface knowledge of several things, and yet not attain to thorough knowledge in anything. St. Thomas tells us that our knowledge is so very short that no philosopher has ever been able perfectly to investigate the nature of even one fly! And that we read of a certain sage who lived thirty years in solitude, that he might be able to know the nature of a bee![1]

[1] Opusc. de Symbol. Apost., c. ii.

Christian doctrine tells us of the twofold life within us, that of nature and that of grace. Both have to be provided for. The natural intellect must be cultivated if we wish to be abreast of the work of life. And the life of grace must be maintained, strengthened, and brought to its perfection sooner or later, that we may be fitted for the everlasting life hereafter. If we propose to order our lives according to God, nature will have to be subordinate to grace, and their various powers directed *in ordine ad finem.* The life of grace does not extinguish the life of nature: nor does faith extinguish intellect: nor the love of God natural love. But the work of perfection regulates and harmonises all for the tranquillity of order.

We are not here considering the millions who live outside Christianity and Catholicism. "These having not the law, are a law to themselves; who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness to them."[1] The light of reason is the light of God to each one of them. Many of them have had and have marvellous intellectual power. Athens has been a centre of intellectual light to the world since the days of the Grecian sages and philos-

[1] Rom. ii. 14.

ophers, and doubtless will be to the end. They were men of natural contemplation, as the saints have been in the supernatural order:

*Across two thousand years their faces smile*
*Upon us, with a still refreshing calm,*
*Rebuking us, that for the little while*
*We last, we turn away from life's true balm,*
*To follow care, and strife, and restless guile.*[1]

But looking now at the children of the Church, "in the make and the making of ourselves," considering life's possibilities; what we are, and what we may be, if we will live according to our best knowledge, we may affirm that humanity is an inheritance—something given to us; or an estate, which we are bound to improve; and that a character without discipline is mere anarchy.[2] Thus we come to self-training and discipline. With Christian and Catholic instinct we must begin with God and divine things. As soon as we come to the use of reason, divine knowledge and love are given to us as our end. And before all things the end must be considered. What seaman will ever start his ship without knowing the port to which

[1]Jas. Knowles. [2]Dr. Barry, Præf. "Structure of life."

he is destined? According to the end our course has to be directed, as in the things of nature, so in those of grace.

This being premised, nature and grace proceed in their education together. God is the God of nature as well as of grace. Everything great, good, and beautiful in nature, grace, and glory is "of Him, by Him, and in Him."[1] Accordingly, let each one make the very best he can of his natural powers: for seeing that grace is grafted on nature, the better the natural powers become, so much the better for our spiritual powers. How much of the priestly and Religious character will depend on the character of the natural man! Let him train himself to the best habits, physical, moral, and intellectual, and they pave the way to the best habits of the priest, the Religious, and the spiritual man. Habits also proper to the inward life of grace have to keep pace with the formation of the natural habits: lest nature, from being indulged, get overstrong in her ways, and the powers of grace decline from want of use. This means to say, for instance, that from early years the practice of mental prayer should go with intellectual cultivation. Thus Newman says:

[1] Rom. xi. 36.

"Nature and man are our studies. But God is higher than all. It is easy to lose Him in His works. The knowledge of sun, moon, and stars, of the earth and its kingdoms, of the classics or of history will never bring us to heaven."[1]

Taking it, however, for granted now that grace and nature are both being well attended to, no doubt the cultivation of classical knowledge will do much to elevate, strengthen, and refine the nature. Athens and Rome, as we know, have produced the immortals of classic literature: and the great Fathers and doctors of the Church have known, loved, and used the gifts of natural light and wisdom shed upon mankind through them by the bountiful hand of Providence. The gifts of God in nature are as apparent as His gifts in grace. His light and beauty have descended on the world in the order of nature through Homer, Æschylus, Plato, Horace, Cicero, and Seneca, as in the order of grace they have come through the Fathers, doctors, and saints. Therefore, let God be ever admired and loved in the works of His hand. *Omnis spiritus laudet Dominum.* In nature, grace, and glory He is "above all, and through all, and in us all."[2]

[1] Serm. ii., "Various occasions." [2] Eph. iv. 6.

We know, indeed, that the laws of nature meet us everywhere. If we indulge a propensity, we strengthen it. If we neglect it, we weaken it. Thus a constant attention to the classics will develop more and more the appreciation and love of them. If this lead us in any way to neglect our spirituality we shall suffer here from want of the higher use and exercise. All along the line nature needs governing by grace. If this amount of self-discipline is not attended to, it is inevitable that the life of grace will be at a disadvantage. And acts make habits. And consequences are God's commentaries. The same line of thought will apply equally to the classics of our own language. Not only they supply us with rare and elevated thoughts, but every word is exact; lines and sentences in exquisite measure; and by careful observation of thought, language, and rhythm all whose object is to think, speak, and write well may help themselves vastly and effectively in their future course; and all the more if their study of these masters of thought and language is well maintained. And yet, let it be said, a passion for poetry and light literature must not be admitted by those whose project it is to maintain the supremacy of grace. The imagination makes

a good servant, but a bad master. Therefore the higher faculties of intellect and heart have to be considered first—the lower powers being brought into the service of the higher. Evidently, without self-training and discipline we shall never come to the tranquillity of order.

The study of Holy Scripture from early years should enter at once into our intellectual and spiritual training. For what is more valuable and desirable both to mind and heart than to listen to the Word of God, in view to the doing thereof? Let it be known, however, from the outset that the inspired Scripture is addressed rather to the heart than the understanding. "What man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him? So the things that are of God no man knoweth, but the spirit of God."[1] "The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he can not understand."[2] It is a heart right with God that gives the disposition for the right understanding of the Word of God. "God makes Himself known to those who sincerely seek Him. Yet He hides His words in such a way that He may not be perceived but by

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 11. [2] Id. v. 14.

those who seek Him with all their heart."[1] Thus Pascal expresses it: "Holy Scripture is not a science of the *mind,* but of the *heart,* and is unintelligible save to those whose heart is right. All others find in it darkness only."[2] This is why non-Catholic critics have not the first element wherewith to understand the inspired Word. They have not the light of God within them. And "as the sacred writings are the work of the Holy Ghost, the words conceal a number of truths which far surpass the strength and penetration of the human reason."[3] "We are as worms in the abyss of divine works. Myriads upon myriads of years would it take, were our hearts ever so religious, and our intellects ever so apprehensive, to receive the just impression of those works as they really are. But sooner than that we should know nothing, God has condescended to speak to us, so far as human thought and language will admit, *by approximations,* in order to give us practical rules for our conduct, amidst His infinite and eternal operations."[4]

"Seeing that God has given the Scriptures to the Church, no one should undertake their study in his own independent spirit,"[5] in mat-

[1] From Pascal.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Leo xiii., Encyc. S. Scrip.
[4] Newman, Univ. Serm. xii.
[5] Leo xiii. sup.

ters concerning doctrine. For the natural man "perceiveth not these things that are of the spirit of God." But the Church has the promise of the Holy Ghost. And "the things that are of God no man knoweth, but the spirit of God." It is the independent spirit that has brought forth all the heresies that have afflicted the Church from the beginning. But in matters of devotion and inward spirit those whose hearts are right with God, who live in contact with the good Spirit, and whose work here below is to progress constantly in the way to God, will delight in recognising the lights that come from love, as the words of Holy Scripture fall from the good Spirit on their souls. And so infinitely rich and adapted to the souls of men are the resources of the Holy Spirit, in the ways of His wisdom and love, that by the same inspired words He teaches many things, and allows us liberty of spirit in applying their meaning to our varied needs. Thus some love to study the literal sense of the words, as being communications of God's light to the world. Others like to observe analogies between nature and grace; and between the workings of God among His people of old and those prefigured by them in the new law. The spiritual senses of Holy Writ,

more especially in the Sapiential books, the Psalms, Job, so many texts of the Prophets, and all the gospels and epistles, are very deep, varied, and soul-satisfying. And some there are, cultivating more and more the inner spirit, who, after St. Augustine, Hilton, and others, delight in finding God's *love* in all His words. Thus St. Augustine: "In what you understand in Holy Scripture, charity is clearly seen. In what you understand not, charity lies hid. So that by holding to charity you hold both to that which is seen and that which is hidden in the divine Word."[1] And Hilton: "By pouring His wisdom into a clean soul God maketh it wise; giving it a new ability and a gracious habit to understand the words and sentences of Holy Writ, unsought and unconsidered. For the lover of God is His friend: and therefore to him He sheweth His secrets, as to a true friend that pleaseth Him by love. And the soul findeth the heavenly sense of Scripture, which belongeth only to the working of love, and that is when all truth in Holy Writ is applied to love."[2]

"Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers." It is wisdom's work to direct our knowledge to life's proper end. We are not to know

[1]Serm. 350 de laude Carit. [2]Scale iii. 13.

for the sake of knowing, but in view of ordering our powers to God's love and service.

*Divine philosophy: by whose pure light*
*We first distinguish, then pursue the right.*

Seeing life's labyrinthian ways, how necessary it is to recognise the right, to distinguish and to choose between many good things, not to take darkness for light, nor light for darkness, then to pursue the right when we see it. But how shall we arrange our capabilities of knowledge? It does not follow because we like a thing we should do it. Did not Adam and Eve do the thing because they liked it? We must learn the discipline of the understanding. Every one who chooses a state of life has to equip himself with the knowledge appertaining thereto. All the world acknowledges this. Thus it is that lawyers, physicians, builders, farmers, army, navy, railway men, and the rest, have each their own proper knowledge to acquire and cultivate. No one can compass knowledge of every kind. But each must see to the knowledge of his state. So it is with those in the Religious and ecclesiastical state. And simple Christian and Catholic life have

their proper knowledge. It is epitomised in the Catechism. And all who cultivate Christian, Catholic, and spiritual life should make it their business and pleasure to add to the proper knowledge of their state of life, whatever it be, the knowledge according to their abilities, and what appertains at once to the cultivation of the natural, the Christian, the Catholic, and the spiritual man. Does not the poet say that "the proper study of mankind is man"? This will lead us to a wise and ordered study of the classics and philosophy, which fit in well with every state of life, and in course of time "bring the philosophic mind," that has so much to do with life's content. Indeed, as Plato says, "until philosophers are kings and the rulers of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and greatness and wisdom meet in one, cities and peoples will never cease from ill."[1]

As the love of the Scriptures is bound up with the cultivation of the Christian spirit, so the love of the divine science of the Church in dogmatic, moral, ascetic, and mystical theology is bound up with the cultivation of the Catholic, religious, and ecclesiastical spirit. All such science is the proper

[1] Repub.

study of churchmen. And in the other states of life all who aim at cultivating Catholic and spiritual life may easily develop a taste for dogmatic and moral study, each according to abilities and drawings, and may and should find a real love for spiritual and ascetic literature; and all in view to the doing as well as the knowing; seeing that before all things the end is to be considered, and according to the end our course has to be directed. A special love for the writings of the Holy Fathers and doctors of the Church should be kept up through life by those of the priestly and Religious state, as handing down through the centuries the traditions of Christian doctrine and spirituality. And all who have a clear and solid system of spiritual life, grounded on Our Lord's words, and the teaching of the inspired writers, will naturally delight in finding the great principles so grandly dealt with by St. Augustine, St. Gregory, St. Ambrose, St. John Chrysostom, St. Jerome, and the Fathers of the Desert—then taken up and so luminously set forth by St. Bernard, St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, Denis the Carthusian, and the doctors and saints, and handed down to our own times by so vast a number of spiritual writers. Is it not sad to

be ignorant of all these treasures of Holy Mother Church, and have the taste running instead in light worldly literature? Newspapers, novels, reviews, and illustrated monthlies run away largely with time and mental energy. Granted that some amount of time has to be given to them, it should be observed that such a taste quickly strengthens and develops into habit; and lower habits easily shut out the higher. Anyhow, higher habits ought to counterbalance the lower. The pity is to find those with large and constant appetite for the lower and little or none for the higher. To indulge the propensity is to strengthen it, either way. Much reading of a light sort whets the appetite for more and more. And with little or no thoughtful study of higher things, the desire thereof soon dies out. As Our Lord says: "He that hath, shall abound; but he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath."[1]

In studying the Fathers, however, of course, there is the *modus in rebus*. Newman, in his early life, tells us that he studied them "chronologically." Only a few experts will find time or inclination for this. But many there are, especially ecclesiastics and

[1] Matt. xiii. 12.

Religious, ever maintaining as they should their love of divine science, who, by means of the index to the works, will be able to refer to the subjects of their study, then to take their notes and affix the reference thereto for future use. How much and how many exquisite passages on the subject of divine charity have we been able thus to annex to our little repertoires!

The study of history may be said to belong to all states of life, seeing that the proper study of mankind is man. Ancient history, modern history, Church history, and the history of our own country, as also the philosophy of history, are important factors in individual education. But few have time for large historical researches. Yet they may fairly cultivate the historical taste and know where to refer to when need be. Needless to say, all practical Christians and those in priestly and Religious life will enjoy the lives of the saints and holy souls, as bringing before us the practice of Christianity and spirituality, as distinct from the abstract. And the reflection of St. John Chrysostom will easily occur as we read, that "we also may be what they were if we do what they did." The Gospel gives us Christianity in its ideal;

the saints' lives give it in practice. The workings of men and nations at the present day are before us in the newspapers: and we may look upon it as among our duties to be fairly *au courant* with the progress of the world. This may be done on principle, without wasting precious time on needless reading, or reading worse than useless; seeing that all our works should be *in ordine ad finem.*

As we are so vastly creatures of habit, it becomes necessary for all who are drawn largely to intellectual culture to counterbalance the activity of the mind by due cultivation of the heart. As an old spiritual writer says, "Love alone attains to God; but thought or understanding, never": which agrees with St. Paul, *si habuero omnem scientiam, etc.* Time and faculties are so limited: and it will never do to be all intellect and no heart. Both the great powers are talents committed to us, and each must be used well and turned to good account. Moreover, for true Christianity, and *a fortiori* for Religious and spiritual life, we have to be under the governance of the Holy Ghost; and this comes not from any amount of natural intellectual activity, but from the right spirit within, and the heart "according to

God." *Cor mundum crea in me Deus; et spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis."*[1] "Show me, O Lord, Thy ways, and teach me Thy paths."[2]

[1] Ps. l. 12.

[2] Ps. xxiv. 4.

## XIII

### Spiritual Culture

Few there seem to be who fully open to life's divine possibilities. Yet the Church's first lesson was that we have been made to the image and likeness of God: and thus are capable of a divine life within. Not that we can get it by any natural power of our own. But we must be "born again." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. You must be born again."[1] We have received the new life at Baptism—the life of grace. Thus we have a twofold life within us—the life of nature and the life of grace.

As nature has her powers for the works of natural life, so grace has her powers for the works of spiritual life. The three principal powers of nature are understanding, memory, and will. The three principal powers of grace are faith, hope, and charity. As we take care of our natural powers, we must take care of our spiritual powers. As we use the natural powers, we must use the

[1] John iii. 6.

spiritual powers. As we cultivate the one, we must cultivate the other. If we use our natural powers, they strengthen: if we neglect to use them, they weaken. So, if we exercise our faith, hope, and charity, we strengthen the divine life within us. If we neglect to use them, our spirituality weakens, and nature, from being indulged, gets the upper hand. Hence the lifelong warfare between nature and grace. "If you live according to the flesh, you shall die: but if, by the spirit, you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live."[1] "Walk in the spirit; and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."[2] As though he said, "Live according to the higher life, and by the power of faith and love you will subdue the inclinations of the natural man."

The life of faith tells us of the unseen world around and above us—the presence of God in all the works of nature and grace, the wondrous sacramental presence of the Word made flesh, and ever dwelling in our midst, offering Himself for love of God and men day and night on all the altars of the world; and giving Himself to us, one by one, in the sacrament of His love, for the food and nourishment of our souls. It tells us, too,

[1]Rom. viii. 13. [2]Gal. v. 16.

of the presence of angels and saints, and their co-operation with God in the works of human life. And it tells us of the Holy Ghost working in the Church by His truth and love, and in all souls individually by the hidden operations of His grace, and through the whole sacramental system. The gift and grace of hope keeps us in lifelong trust to the goodness of God and the riches of His mercies, which are "over all His works,"[1] and to the immense merits of Our Lord; seeing that "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for those of the whole world."[2] He has placed His promises in His Church, as He made His covenant with His chosen people of old: and herein we have the assurance of divine truth and grace in the Church's teaching and sacraments. But God "has nowhere said that He will not extend His mercies wider than His promises."[3] Thus many good souls outside the body of the Church in good faith, with trust and love to God, and sorrow for sin, may be justified by "the uncovenanted mercies of God"; according to the words of St. Peter, "in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh justice, is acceptable to Him."[4]

[1]Ps. cxliv. 9. [2]1 John ii. 2.
[3]Newman, Serm. "Faith and Experience." [4]Acts x. 35.

Again, many tender souls are over-anxious about sins confessed or forgotten. Let them remember that love and contrition are of themselves purifying to the soul: and that Our Lord's sacred merits in the sacrifice of the Mass directly purify from sins, in the case of those who may have such hidden and forgotten, yet have no will to keep them in the heart, this applying not only to smaller sins, but grave ones.

Such is the teaching of the Church in the Council of Trent, as follows:

"Venial sins, though they may be confessed, yet without fault they may remain unconfessed and be expiated by other remedies."[1] And inasmuch as in the Mass "Christ is contained and mystically immolated, so this holy sacrifice is truly propitiatory, so that if herein we turn to God with true faith, love, and reverence—contrite and penitent—we hereby obtain His mercy and grace. For Our Lord God, appeased by this oblation, granting the grace of penance, forgives us even great sins;"[2] and, further, "gives us the remission of those sins we daily commit."[3] And when we receive the Holy

[1]Conc. Trid. Sess. xiv. c. v.
[2]Peccata etiam ingentia dimittit. Id. s. xxii, c. ii.
[3]In remissionem eorum, quæ a nobis quotidie committuntur, peccatorum. Id. c. i.

Communion "we are delivered from venial sins and preserved from mortal sins."[1]

Add to this the teaching of the Angelic Doctor on the purifying power of love. "God accepts rather the love of the heart than external acts. But by external acts a soul is freed from both sin and penalty. Therefore in like manner it is freed by the love of the heart. Thus, contrition rising from love may avail to free the soul both from guilt and punishment."[2]

All this proceeds from God's goodness, Our Lord's merits, and a loving and contrite heart. It is all the exercise of the virtue of hope. How salutary to the spiritual life it is to have full confidence in it all, as the clear teaching of the Word of God and of the Church, with a corresponding diffidence in ourselves and our own imperfect views. Souls are detained, held back, and impeded in their spiritual course by not taking the straight way of love, contrition, and the Mass. And acts make habits. Their habits are those of fear, and multiplied examens and confessions of venials and miseries. Thus they live in their "mournful lurking holes," and rise not to the light of divine contemplation. All this contains vastly help-

[1] S. xiii. c. ii. [2] Suppl. Q. 5, A. 2.

ful lessons for the work of spiritual culture. But let us be doers of the Word and not hearers only. Let us beware of our own natural fancies and activities. God is the principal worker in the works of grace, as in those of nature; and we must work in all according to Him. The habitual exercise of faith and hope lead on to the chief of all factors in spiritual life and culture, the greatest of the theological and of all the virtues, divine charity. Let us ever remember that this not only means the love of God above all things, but it means the mutual love between the soul and God—God loving us and we loving Him. He thinking of us and we of Him. He abiding with us and we with Him. He working with us and we with Him. He enjoying Himself with us and we enjoying ourselves with Him.[1] And it ever means in its practical working charity at once *affective* and *effective;* that is, the inner life of love disposed to outward acts and working both for God and our neighbour, in

[1]Caritas non solum significat amorem Dei, sed etiam amicitiam quandam ad Ipsam; quæ quidem super amorem addit mutuam redamationem cum quadam communicatione mutua. Et quod hoc ad caritatem pertineat patet per id, "Qui manet in caritate in Deo manet, et Deus in eo." 1 John iv. Hæc autem societas hominis ad Deum, quæ est quædam familiaris conversatio cum Ipso, inchoatur quidem hic in præsenti per gratiam, perficietur autem in futuro per gloriam. St. Thom. i. 2. Q. 65. A. 5.

all the different callings of life, according to individual abilities and opportunities. Affective charity is the sweet, inward, abiding habit, uniting God and the soul together in the life of mutual love. It implies the choice and preference of Our Lord God above all things. It sees Him in all the works of His hand, in nature, grace, and glory. It realises Him as the one and only Good, as Our Lord says, "None is good but God alone."[1] And it sees all other creatures as the recipients of His goodness. All this is truth and light. And "God is light; and in Him there is no darkness."[2] This gradually brings a soul to the divine receptive disposition, by which all its works, instead of being the offspring of natural activity, become the pourings of light, love, and power divine; God and the soul ever working in all together. *Qui Spiritu Dei aguntur, ii sunt filii Dei.*[3] "He is above all, and through all, and in us all."[4] "In Him we live and move and have our being."[5] "Of Him, and by Him, and in Him are all things."[6] "There are diversities of operations, but the same God, who worketh all in all."[7]

See that river flowing so swiftly along!

[1]Luke xviii. 19. [4]Eph. iv. 6. [6]Rom. xi. 36.
[2]1 John i. 5. [5]Acts xvii. 28. [7]1 Cor. xii. 6.
[3]Rom. viii. 14.

It carries all before it! But here. at the bank, is a twig, a cork, a number of dead leaves. They are outside the mighty flow. They do not go on. They flutter here and turn round and round the same way. These are figures of poor, weakly souls, that give themselves not up to God, that go not on with the flowings and pourings of the spirit of God. They are left behind. They have lost their spirit and enthusiasm in divine things. How sad not to give all in order to gain all!

The inward love of the soul under the governance of the Holy Ghost moves us to all the works of love in a thousand different ways, and this both to contemplative love and active love. As God Himself is the one, great, and only Good, and the Fountain of all goodness in His creatures, a loving soul naturally "prefers the attendance on God before all external things."[1] And in the many different degrees and states of mental and contemplative prayer God and the soul are ever working together. Our Lord at Nazareth, with our Lady and St. Joseph, show us the beauty of the life hidden with Christ in God. The many passing externals in the midst of creatures are like the waves

[1]Imit. iii. 53.

of the sea, rising and falling, without any of them acquiring consistency. Let us ever hold to the one great reality. We are destined everlastingly for union with God by mutual love. Therefore the more we have of this here below the better. It ought alone to be soul-satisfying to us. And by the power of this inward love we are fitted in the best way for the accomplishment of outer acts, seeing that we work then in dependence on Him "who worketh all in all."[1]

Yet until the habit of habits is sufficiently formed within us nature's activities *will* continue to assert themselves. And although for "the pearl of great price" all must be given, and although the higher love within says, "Forsake all and thou shalt find all: leave thy desires and thou shalt find rest,"[2] yet the liking and the desire for fleeting engagements and preferments, passing changes and activities, in the midst of pleasant works and people, enjoying a good share of notice, esteem, success, and satisfaction, easily entwine the spirit, and some there are who can not reconcile themselves to live without these things. Yet, is not all vanity, besides loving God and serving Him alone? Must we not "throw our hearts into eternity"?

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 6. [2] Imit. iii. 32.

If we are "all for God," enjoying His presence and the life of love with Him, and ever united with Our Lord and the Church in the work of souls, why should we not be "free" from these very fleeting accidentals? "The lover is free, and is not held. He gives all for all; and has all in all; because he rests in one sovereign Good above all. He looks not at the gifts, but turns himself to the Giver, above all goods. O my God, my Love, Thou art all mine, and I am all Thine."[1]

All these are the workings of contemplative love, and herein the soul must ever find its supreme satisfaction. Never will it do to be unsatisfied with divine things—to be dependent on externals for happiness. What will the divine Lover say if we are not fully satisfied with Him alone? Small wonder that He detaches us from pleasant workings, lest anything should engage our hearts independently of Himself. Thus, in times of trial, monotony, and suffering we must go to Him alone. The sweetness of His presence, love, and service will be the true joy of our life; nor must we look for satisfaction elsewhere.

Truly it is well said that when Our Lord wants us He will know where to find us.

[1] Imit. iii. 5.

And so when He wills He sends us forth from the works of *affective* to those of *effective* charity, for His own great ends and the vast needs of souls. As in all the works of nature and grace God Himself is ever the chief agent, so let Him ever arrange as He wills, distributing His gifts, fitting each one for his proper office and work, and using all according to the purpose of His will.

How easily, indeed, the human spirit mixes and mingles with divine things! It must be so until the soul of man is subject to the spirit of God: *Nonne Deo subjecta erit anima mea?*[1] Here we find the need of interior formation; for without care and self-discipline nature quickly goes her own way, and this from force of long habit. The higher habit must be called into use and be strengthened by exercise and brought under the governance of the good Spirit; and then all the works of outer life proceed according to God, God and the soul ever working together.

Then, as God wills, the whole course of life proceeds day by day, according to the divine providence and arrangements. Little does it matter to a soul thus united in love with God as to how the divine Lover may

[1] Ps. lxiv. 1.

will to employ it. Why should it matter? Externals are but accidentals. God and the soul are together in all. This is the great essential, this the one great reality of life. Vanity of vanities; and all is vanity, besides loving God, and serving Him alone.

## XIV

### The Divine Agency of Creatures

It is clearly according to God's own plan in both orders of nature and grace to use the agency of His creatures in the accomplishment of His works. It seems wonderfully condescending and loving of the Creator thus to wish to associate His creatures with Himself, making them, indeed, so closely His coadjutors and co-creators, as though He delighted in pouring over them a share of His divine life and power, that they as well as He Himself might be known, loved, praised, and glorified, both in heaven and on earth. And thus speaking of men, He says: "You are gods, and all sons of the Most High."[1]

Truly, indeed, we must ever remember that the Creator is everything and the creature nothing. But this ever goes without saying. It is fundamental Christian truth. It ever stands. No other teaching ever dis-

[1] Ps. lxxxi. 6.

places it. Thus the Creator is alone magnificent and glorious and the creature's glory is in its humility and nothingness.

Let us first of all see the divine scheme in the wondrous works of nature. "God is light; and in Him there is no darkness."[1] Yet He wills to give us light in the natural order through the agency of the sun. He need not have done so, yet He wills to do so. And we admire the sun in its astonishing magnitude and power, governing, as it does, the vast family of worlds around it, keeping them steadily poised in space, whirling though they are in their orbits around it at the rate of a thousand miles a minute. God has put all this power in the sun: and through it and with it He governs the system of the worlds. "How great are Thy works, O Lord! Thou hast made all things in wisdom: the whole earth is filled with Thy greatness."[2]

To the same stupendous orb the Creator commits the power of contributing warmth to the worlds around it. Without this warmth on earth death would inevitably follow. Imagine how things would fare on earth without the sun. Means of smaller warmth are found in earthly fires. But

[1] 1 John i. 5. [2] Ps. ciii. 24.

small or great, God does not warm us Himself, but through the agency of His sun, and of the coal and wood that He provides. Thus inhabitants of earth have not to cry, "O God, give me light and warmth," for God says, "I have given My light and warmth to sun, and coal, and wood; go to them." In like manner God frames materials for our food and clothing, and bids us go to the produce of the earth—to the herbs and fruits—in them He has placed the power of nourishing the human frame, and for clothing we may go to the beasts of the field, and through their skins sustain the warmth necessary for life. All are God's gifts, but through His appointed creatures.

Look at life itself here below and our wondrous powers of soul and body. God might certainly have created each one of us immediately Himself. Yet this is not His plan. He decrees inflexibly to give us life through our parents. May we not say here that parents are God's co-creators? Do they not give existence to other human beings? Yea, and without them those that exist would have no existence! Here, indeed, is shown the unique dignity of Matrimony. How divine the whole plan appears! Men are made for God and heaven. Their destiny is

to everlasting friendship with the divine Lover of all. The angelic choirs are to be their associates. And all are to love one another with the God who made them. But all these gifts of God, with life itself, come through the agency of other creatures. It is as though the Creator would not work alone. He will have His creatures share His glory with Him.

It is the same in all the ordinary needs of human life. How necessary education is. But God teaches us through others. He has invented science, language, letters. Others above us have teaching capacity. We must go to them. No one is sufficient for himself. The divine Giver of good things has given stores of light and learning to men of genius and power in ages gone by—the sages and philosophers of Greece and Rome, the thinkers, poets, orators, historians, scientists, lawyers, mathematicians, artists, writers of the world—and through them God gives us of His abundance. How could we live without houses, means of transit, arts of farming, building, healing, and labouring in a thousand different ways, for the many varied wants, day by day and hour by hour of peoples, nations, and individuals? God provides us with all through the hands of our

fellow-creatures. He wills that we love both Him and one another; and so, in order to do this, He makes us dependent not only on Himself, but on one another, too. Thus we are bound to help one another and so to love one another. Life here below then becomes a true preparation for life hereafter. The love of God and of one another runs through all things.

Coming now to the divine order of grace, it is to be fully expected that God will work herein as He does in nature. So it is, indeed, in the work of all works, that of the incarnation. It might have been supposed that in so marvellous an undertaking the Creator would have worked alone. Yet it was not so. In a way closer and more exquisite and intimate than ever, He wills to have and to form His sacred humanity from the flesh and blood of a human mother. O mystery of mysteries! What a co-operation, what an association of a creature with the Creator! God wills to put Himself in utter dependence on His creature here. He will not have a body but through her. As a newborn babe He will be kept from cold through her. He, the Lord of all, wills not to feed Himself. She shall do it; yea, with the stream of her own most pure life! O what

union! What love! What choice! What preference! The ministrations of a mother to the Creator! And He willed to stand, and to sit, and to walk, and to lie down through her! He who could do all alone did all through her!

As Our Lord is the source of all grace to mankind, and He has willed to come to us through His blessed mother, so it has been truly said that all our graces come through Mary.[1] This is not difficult to understand, seeing as we do the analogy of the natural order. It seems to be altogether according to the divine plan for the Creator to use His creatures in accomplishing His works, as in nature, so in grace. Ever taking it, as in truth it is, God the source of grace and Mary its appointed channel, it seems but part of the beautiful scheme of divine wisdom and love, arranged to make us more and more loving both to God and to the chosen creatures of His hand. And following on the same wondrous workings of the divine Providence, we may see also all the bright angelic choirs receiving from their queen the graces of God, passing them on to the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and saints, and these in

[1] Totum nos habere voluit per Mariam. St. Bern., Serm. de Nativ. Virg. Mar.

their turn distributing them to the souls of men on earth. In this way our blessed Lady, the angels, and the saints are all very active, as well as very contemplative—all very much engaged with us, and very loving to us, as we in return should be so loving and grateful to them.

And when we see all the supernatural workings of the Church militant on earth, we find, indeed, Our Lord God placing His divine treasures in earthly vessels and using our poverty and weakness for the greatest and divinest of His operations. The revelation of His truth is through the organisation of His church. The divine voice speaks through human tongues. The spirit of God works through the apostolic ministry. Thus "there are diversities of graces, but the same spirit. There are diversities of ministries, but the same Lord. There are diversities of operations, but the same God who worketh all in all."[1] In the greatest of all His gifts to men, the gift of Himself, in His sacramental and sacrificial life, the same plan is ever apparent. As He gave Himself by His mother, He now gives Himself by His priests. It is as though His greatest gifts should be at once the work of God and man

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 4.

—as though He would have us love one another and depend on one another as well as love and depend on Himself. How great, how good, how loving is Our Lord God to the children of men! How little we realise the exaltation of our nature!

All the sacraments of the Church are designed to work in the same way. The merits of Our Lord alone can wash away the sins of the world. "Behold the Lamb of God! Behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world!" Yet Our Lord wills to baptize by His priests, to absolve by His priests, to consecrate by His priests, to teach, to enlighten souls, to work conversions, to communicate the marvels of His grace by means of the priesthood of His Church.

And while the people depend upon the priests for their spiritual needs, the priests depend on the people for their temporal needs. To them we turn for our food and clothing, the warmth we need, the structure of our houses and churches, the means of travelling, the requirements of health, the administration of justice, the protection of property, the government of the country. Thus there is ever giving and taking, that we may love and help one another. God Himself ever the great *Agens principale*—

the beginning and the end of all—yet in the ways of His wisdom and love making the creatures of His hand sharers in His life and work. Does not the inspired Apostle point to it all in his memorable words? "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto profit. To one, indeed, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit. To another, faith in the same Spirit. To another, the grace of healing, in one spirit. To another, the working of miracles. To another, prophecy. To another, the discernment of spirits. To another, divers kinds of tongues. To another, interpretation of speeches. But all these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as He will."[1]

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 7.

## XV

### The Divine Model of Obedience

By His incarnation the infinitely great, good, holy, loving God gives *Himself* to His creatures. *Nobis datus, nobis natus*—coming from heaven to earth, as the Saviour, the Teacher, the Model of men, the representative Man, the propitiation for our sins, that we may all go to God through Him. All this and much more that our poor, feeble understanding can not grasp is brought before us when we think of the great mystery of God made man.

Shall we not then turn to Our Lord and be with Him in preference to all others? If He comes to us, shall we not go to Him? If He thinks of us, shall we not think of Him? If He loves us, shall we not love Him? If He abides with us, shall we not abide with Him? If He gives Himself to us, shall not we give ourselves to Him? If He enjoys Himself with us, shall not we enjoy ourselves with Him?

How much we have to learn from our blessed Lord when we look at Him as the

model and perfect Man! But let us give earnest and frequent consideration to His wondrous *obedience.* Too little do we think of it in its connection with the incarnation.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."[1] Look at Our Lord coming down from heaven to earth, in obedience to the will of His eternal Father. Oh, the infinite enjoyments of the eternal Trinity, the unspeakable life, the ineffable wisdom, the ever-pouring love of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. What is this sudden humiliation of the divine, this contact of the all-holy spirit with poor created flesh? Yes, and much more than contact: for *the Word was made flesh.* What can we say, but that it was the love of the Creator for the creatures of His hand? God so willed that the divine Son should come down, should empty Himself, should take our human nature, and that in the form of a servant He should become obedient even to suffering and death, and with all this the sacred humanity was perfect in all its faculties and powers. How perfect were Our Lord's human intelligence,

[1]Philipp. ii. 5.

memory, and will? Yet in all He was subject to the divine wisdom and will, saying of Himself, "I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me."[1] But much more than all this, Our Lord, the eternal wisdom, is obedient to His own creatures. See His marvellous subjection to His holy Mother. He need not have received His sacred humanity from her. But He willed to do so. He was obedient to the laws of human life in her. Then as an infant, wholly subject to her motherly care and keeping. How can we ever compass the thought of such mystery? The Word made flesh so wholly subject to His mother! What a position for the Creator! What a position for the creature! How lovely is Mary's humility in it all. "He that is mighty hath done great things to me." For "He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid." It is as though God delighted to enrich His creatures with His own life and dignity, even though He bring Himself to subjection and humility! And how He carries it all on to Mary and even to Joseph during those thirty long years of His hidden life at Nazareth. "He went down to Nazareth, and was subject to them." And oh what sub-

[1] John vi. 38.

jection, what humiliation, and obedience to His wretched persecutors during His sacred passion; obedient to their awful ways, all along the dreadful stages of His sufferings, obedient to death, even the death of the cross.

Is our blessed Lord going any further in obedience to His creatures? Ah, yes, indeed! Mystery on mystery. He carries on His incarnation in His sacramental and sacrificial life, being a priest forever according to the Order of Melchisedec. And He is the head of the body, the Church. And He is the chief agent in all the Church's sacramental system. But He wills His priests to work with Him. *Volo Pater ut ubi Ego sum, illic sit et minister Meus.* Thus Our Lord baptizes, Our Lord absolves, Our Lord consecrates. But see His obedience! He waits to the very moment for the voice of His priest. And He who is the propitiation for the sins of the world stays the word of His forgiveness till the voice of His creature moves Him to obey! And so the divine and perfect model Man carries on His obedience every day, hour, moment, living and working in His Church among the souls of men, in obedience to His eternal Father, and to the word of His own creatures! "Let this

mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Let us remember that our first obedience is the "obedience of faith."[1] How readily and lovingly should the creature be subject to the Creator here! It is of God to speak and of man to listen. *Vox Domini in virtute. Vox Domini in magnificentia.*[2] It is of God to reveal and of man to believe. Faith is not a seeing or an understanding. It is a submission—the submission at once of the intellect and will. Our Lord Himself committed His divine truths to the apostles: "All things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you."[3] Here is the deposit of faith, the legacy of revelation, of which the Church of the apostles is the divinely appointed trustee. And the Church in all ages hands on and unfolds the divine truth to the nations. "The Holy Ghost will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you."[4] Thus it is that all the children of the Church are one and united, in faith, because of their obedience to the divine authority. And if we are to advance in the virtue of faith, and in the perfection of Christian

[1] Rom. xvi. 26.
[2] Ps. xxviii. 4.
[3] John xv. 15.
[4] Id. xiv. 26.

and religious life, the same obedience to the good Spirit should animate us in submitting our minds and hearts to all the authoritative utterances of the Holy See and the voice of the living superiors. Such is the dictate of faith and religion: and the twofold united working of confidence in God and diffidence in ourselves, which lie at the root of true spirituality, should ever move us hereto. Why do men turn from the Church's living voice? Because of confidence in themselves and diffidence in the Church. This is not Our Lord's divinely provisioned way. Confidence in God and diffidence in ourselves are among the first lessons of the "spiritual combat."

Obedience to law necessarily follows the obedience of faith—obedience to the laws of God, to the laws of the Church, to the powers that be, to the duties of our state and office, and to the good pleasure of God in all the toils and trials of life. Is not submission to the Creator ever the proper attitude of the creature? And was it not self-will that "brought death into this world, and all our woe"? Let it ever be remembered that obedience is a divine principle, giving us the will of God to be done. Truly it ought to be the joy of the creature to do the will of the

Creator. How firmly resolved, therefore, we ought all to be never to break the law of God by any grave sin. How firm ought to be our stand here. No wavering must there be in the time of temptation. Waverers are those who have not come to a decision. But in the love and service of God we must always be decided. Love is preference: and God must ever be in the first place. Hence in all these things the divine will governs the human will. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." And as St. Teresa says, "We make it our joy to please God."[1]

Venial transgressions, as the Angelic Doctor tells us, are deviations from the right order to the end. Therefore, whenever and however the divine will is declared to us, whether by the commandments, the authority of the Church, the living voice of superiors, the duties of daily life, or the arrangements and permissions of Providence, we must train ourselves to the submission of our self-will and self-love to the orderings of the divine love and will above us.

If our inner life of love with God be well established, what difficulty will there be? Of course the two great factors in all these things will be prayer and mortification.

[1] Exclamat.

Prayer, to lift the spirit upward to love and converse with God, maintaining the soul in the habitual sense of the divine presence, from which follows at once the full submission to the divine will, come what may; and mortification, to clear away the impediments to all this, arising from the clamorous exactions of the natural man. And as the divine love increases, so self-love decreases. "He must increase, but I must decrease."[1] But prayer it is, more especially mental and internal, that brings the increase of divine love, and mortification it is, that, by the ways of detachment and self-renunciation, brings the decrease of self-love. In this way prayer helps mortification, and mortification helps prayer. Neither one nor the other can be dispensed with. They are charity's own inseparable attendants through life, and they grow with her growth and strengthen with her strength. And all spiritual life and progress are reduced to the soul's advancement in the ways of love, prayer, and mortification. Divine love the end, and prayer and mortification the means thereto.

[1] John iii. 30.

## XVI

### Abstract and Concrete Spirituality

LET theory and practice always go together. We can not dispense either with one or the other. Men of the world combine knowledge and action in all the walks of life; and we must be as wise in spirituals as they are in temporals. Thus let all cultivate well during the whole course of life the knowledge of spiritual things. What can compare in interest and importance to them? And certainly to priests and Religious they are the proper science of their profession. But the same may be said for Christian life. Have we not learned from the beginning that we were made for the knowledge, love, and service of God? Is it not, then, a thousand pities to find devout Catholics who make a point of observing the externals of their religion, and take up a number of devotions and good works, yet having but little relish for the study of their inner cultivation, advancement, and perfection? They love to read novels, history, and poetry; but some-

how they can not even be driven to the study of solid spirituality.

Mental prayer and spiritual reading will be the two exercises whereby the knowledge of divine things will be gradually gained by a soul. All, therefore, should so arrange their time as to secure to themselves what is so requisite to their spiritual well-being. Reading is to the mind what feeding is to the body. All find time for bodily refection. It is a necessity of life. They ought to be as wise in attending to their spiritual welfare. Instinct tells people what is wholesome and what unwholesome diet; and all have due care of themselves in such things. Why are they not equally provident for their souls?

The fact is, they get into their ways, and then with difficulty get out of them. How is it consistent to find time for newspapers and novels and none for the reading of holy books? They indulge the liking for one, and it grows into a pleasant habit. They do nothing for the other, and of course they can not love what they do not know.

There is a great difference between the intellectual consideration of spiritual things and real progress in spirituality. The one is a form of intellectual activity, which may

be merely of the natural man, exercising himself, indeed, on the highest and best of objects. The other is the working of grace and of the good spirit within the soul. The knowing without the doing of things is an easy matter. One is of the intellect, the other of the will. A man may have much knowledge with little practice, as in natural, so in spiritual things. It is as one having a light in hand, and neither going nor showing the way. Or as one having the power of language and never bringing it into use. Hence Our Lord's emphatic words, "If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them."[1]

The knowing is certainly intended for the doing. On the other hand, the doing is often not there for want of sufficient knowledge: as the prophet of old declared: "Therefore is my people led away captive, because they had not knowledge."[2] People can not will things if they do not know them. Thus, *nil volitum nisi præcognitum.* How evident, therefore, the importance of knowledge becomes. All the world is alive to it. No man dares to undertake a profession without the careful study of its corresponding science. Men of business and ordinary labour are

[1]John xiii. 17. [2]Is. v. 13.

bound to know what they have to do. Whoever would set up as a cook or bricklayer without the proper knowledge of his work? Have we not all great spiritual work to be done? We are made for divine knowledge and love. As Christians we have to know this work. As Religious or priests we have to know its higher degrees and its perfect workings. Will not all this imply the study of a perfect life? Will it not imply the careful consideration of high principle, of mental and moral culture, of much design and steady aim in life, of nature's reformation, and of the whole life of grace, of the presence of God, of hindrances and helps on our way to Him; of desire, resolution, and practice in spiritual things; of actual and habitual union with God, and the ways and means thereto, by the many degrees of prayer and mortification? All this is lifelong work. It is the formation of habit, and of many habits, and of the highest and most perfect habits of which man is capable. How can we content ourselves with an insufficiency of knowledge in spiritual things, which children of the world would never endure in temporals? How can we bring ourselves to give but meagre time and care to such vast interests, affecting so closely the glory of

God, the work of the Church and of souls, and our own great benefit, happiness, and merit here and hereafter? Certainly we must open our eyes to these magnificent truths, and love to think of them, and dwell upon them, if we are to have any hope of making them effective and concrete in our own souls. Therefore we must love both the one and the other, the knowing and the doing.

Yet knowledge alone, without living and working accordingly, is truly a deplorable inconsistency, dividing and molesting the spirit within. Certainly we know God, in order to love and serve Him. And if we advance in the knowledge of divine things, we ought more and more to desire and determine to make our knowledge practical and effective. Otherwise we come to theoretical spirituality, having the light to see and not the courage to do.

But let us be well assured that in the divine ways of true spiritual life the spirit of God is Himself the chief agent. So, indeed, it is in all the works of nature and grace. *Deus est agens principale.* The Holy Ghost is ever the Lord and life-giver; the leader and mover of souls; the author and finisher of the work of our sanctification and per-

fection. "The kingdom of God is within you." God lives and reigns therein, and "all things must be subdued to Him." This is indeed the perfection of the creature, to be in all its powers and workings wholly subject to the Creator. Then He gives us of His life, light, love, and happiness, making us thus "partakers of the divine nature."[1] All this is God's own work within the souls of men. And we work with Him. But unless we take care we are forever putting impediments to His work within us. And this is why so many do not advance as they might, could, would, and should in a spiritual course. They cling to their own wills and ways and workings. They act imperfectly and independently of the good spirit. They seek the things that are their own: and their very natural activity becomes a constant hindrance to the higher workings of grace. Is not this the constant teaching of the "Imitation," that we must leave ourselves to find God, that we must give all for all, that the more we deny ourselves, the greater progress we make? And is it not all implied in Our Lord's sentence, "He that shall lose his life shall find it"? And as He speaks in St. Catherine's "Dialogue," "The more thou

[1] 2 Peter i. 4.

dost empty thyself of that which is thine own, the more abundantly will I fill thee with that which is Mine." Therefore, true spiritual life, union with God, contemplative prayer, the habitual sense of the divine presence in prayer and action, all are gifts and graces of God to the soul, for "every best and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights."[1] Our work, therefore, is to clear our souls of impediments, that God may engage them with His light and love. It is of us to cleanse the vessel, it is of God to fill it. But if we continue to run along the ways of nature by our own activities, we engage ourselves, our time, our powers, our workings; and how are our minds and hearts then free for the communications of God's light and love? "The lover is free; he is not held; he gives all for all; and has all in all."[2] It is altogether a matter of love and preference. If Our Lord God sees that our hearts willingly open to lower things, do we not thereby voluntarily put impediments to the higher? It is not to be expected that the good Spirit will force His gifts upon us. He wills that we invite Him, choose Him, prefer Him, shutting our hearts to the entrance of others, to give the

[1] James i. 17. [2] Imit. iii. 5.

preference over all to Him. "My son, give Me thy heart."[1] All this means we have to become loving and courageous souls. How are we the real thing before God short of this? But the important and practical point here is that our principles have to be applied to our acts—to the ordinary works of daily life. The perfection of virtues is not in the *habit,* but the *act.* Thus, habitual grace has to work the works of life within us. Grace works by her powers, as nature works by her powers. Nature works by mind, memory, heart, and will, and by all the senses and members, and grace works by faith, hope, charity, and all the virtues. The duties and works of daily life are the *material* of a virtuous and perfect life. Grace and love have to animate and inform them. *Caritas est forma virtutum.*[2] Thus it is that the good Spirit governs us in the works of life: and hence the well-approved teaching that perfection is in our ordinary actions. It will not be sufficient, therefore, to have the habit of faith within us, if we do not do the works of faith, living, thinking, speaking, and acting according to faith, and never against it. It must be the same with the habit of hope. The full trust in God's goodness and love for us, and

[1] Prov. xxiii. 26. [2] St. Thom. 2. 2. Q. 23. A. 8.

in the abounding merits of Christ, and His loving readiness to forgive us—*quoniam multus est ad ignoscendum*[1]—must govern our thoughts and acts, keeping us from presuming wrongly on the one hand and from discouragement, depression, and inane fears and scruples on the other: ever training ourselves to bring all delusive fancies under the governance of divine hope and love: being assured that with no will for grievous sin, the soul is justified and purified by love, contrition, and the Mass, wherein Our Lord is the "propitiation for our sins."[2] Nor will it be enough to extol the praises of divine charity if we do not in daily life work practically for the love of God and our neighbour. Love is preference. Do we, therefore, love to turn to God as the first and best of all, choosing to give our thoughts and hearts to Him before all external things? Is it ever our delight to assist at Mass, the Divine Office, and mental prayer, and to sacrifice the presence of creatures for that of our blessed Lord? Do we "walk with God" in the midst of the natural world around us, or are we habitually drawn from Him by things of earth and natural pleasures? Do we volun-

[1] Is. lv. 7.
[2] Peccata etiam ingentia dimittit. Conc. Trid. xxii. 2.

tarily mortify natural love to gain divine love? Does our love of God constantly overflow to the love of souls? How many poor souls in dire need of spiritual help are ever around and about us. What frightful "leakage" is going on! "An ass falls," says St. Bernard, "and some one is found to raise it. A soul falls, and no one is found to attend to it."[1] Yet Our Lord tells us that whatever we do to the least of His brethren, we do it to Himself. "Woe to the shepherds of Israel that fed themselves. Should not the flocks be fed by the shepherds? You ate, and clothed yourselves, but My flock you did not feed. The weak you have not strengthened, and the sick you have not healed. That which was broken, you have not bound up. That which was driven away you have not brought back; neither have you sought that which was lost: but you ruled over them with a high hand. And My sheep were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and they became the prey of the beasts of the field. There was none that sought them—there was none, I say, that sought them. Thus saith the Lord, I will come upon the shepherds, and will require My flock at their hands."[2]

We may often think and speak about

[1] De Consid. iv. 6. [2] Ezech. xxxiv. 2, etc.

prayer, silence, mortification, observance of rule, and good use of time: about internal and external worship of God, in the Mass, and the Divine Office: about sobriety, punctuality, good external comportment, true fraternal charity, doing ordinary things well, and the rest. But "be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only."[1] Do we *love* to make our mental prayer, *love* to keep silence, *love* to deny and sacrifice ourselves for God and our neighbour, to assist at Mass, and say the Divine Office? Sobriety, punctuality, external comportment ought to be formed habits, producing their corresponding acts readily and faithfully. We all admire and praise them; do we practise them effectively? The constant and earnest aim of gradually developing the habit of perfect charity to God and one another by means of the assiduous exercise of prayer and mortification seems to be the one great guarantee for getting from abstract into solid concrete spirituality.

[1] James i. 22.

## XVII

### Charity's Purifying Power

A LOVING soul has no will for deliberate sin. Yet it may have offended much in past years. It will still have many faults, frailties, and shortcomings: and maybe various "perverse habitudes." On the other side, spiritual perfection is a very gradual work. It implies the formation of many habits, by which the powers of grace little by little get into the ascendency, and nature's imperfect ways are brought into subjection thereto, by which the human spirit is taught, and trained, and formed, and fashioned, according to the model life of Christ, yielding itself voluntarily and lovingly to the governance of the spirit of God.

Premising that such souls are in right earnest in their maintenance of the life of grace, and that their constant will is to endeavour to advance, each one in his own calling, and by means of the toils and trials of daily life, little by little, to the union of perfect charity with God, it becomes a matter of the first importance for them to know clearly the right view to take of their faults,

and the proper method of managing them, in view to the main work of their spiritual progress and perfection.

Before all things in this connection, let it ever be borne in mind that God Himself is the chief factor in the soul's purification and perfection. "The kingdom of God is within you."[1] And "they who are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God."[2] "If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit."[3] Thus the spirit of God is at once the life giver, sanctifier, and perfecter of the souls of men, we freely and lovingly giving ourselves to Him and working with Him in mutual love. This being so, and seeing that it is God "who worketh all in all,"[4] we shall clearly find the direct and most effectual method of ridding ourselves of all impediments to the reign of God within us (among which are to be chiefly reckoned the manifold faults and fears of nature) by going directly to God Himself with love, and strong confidence in His goodness and "His mercies, which are over all His works,"[5] and the merits of Christ, beneath which we shelter our miseries, making thus our acts of love and contrition, with the will to amend

[1]Luke xvii. 21. [2]Rom. viii. 14. [3]Gal. v. 25.
[4]1 Cor. xii. 6. [5]Ps. cxliv. 9.

and advance; and all this during the oblation of the Mass, at Holy Communion, or before the tabernacle, seeing that Our Lord is then so immediately "the propitiation for our sins." Such a method of dealing with all our venial sins, faults, frailties, and inane fears is much to be preferred to the constant use of self-examen and confession, which breed so quickly fear and scrupulosity, thus keeping souls in their "mournful lurking holes," and hindering them from rising to the light and joy of divine contemplation. Self-examination and confession, indeed, are directly requisite for mortal sinners and careless livers; and for those heedless and careless as to venial sins they are also directly helpful. But here we are considering careful and loving souls, having no will for deliberate sin, and studying how best to advance to the union of mutual love with God, and yet falling and failing seven times a day, yet rising and progressing as often by renewed love and earnest endeavour. Let all such well-willed souls attend now to what the Church and the saints say, and learn to be at once loving and courageous. The Council of Trent thus teaches: "Venial sins, while they may be rightly confessed, may also without fault remain unconfessed, and

be expiated by other remedies."[1] And inasmuch as in the Mass "Christ is contained and mystically immolated, so this Holy Sacrifice is truly propitiatory, and when herein we turn to God with true faith, love, and reverence, contrite and penitent, we hereby obtain His mercy and grace. For Our Lord God, appeased by this oblation, granting the grace of penance, forgives us even our great sins."[2] and further, "the sins we daily commit."[3] And again, by receiving Holy Communion we are "delivered from venial sins, and preserved from mortal sins."[4]

Thus also the Tridentine Catechism: "It is not to be doubted that the Holy Eucharist remits venial sins. Whatever the soul has lost by falling into lighter offences, all this the Eucharist cancels and repairs, as natural food restores and repairs the daily waste." As St. Ambrose says, that "daily bread is taken as a remedy for daily infirmity."[5]

The Church also, during the octave of Pentecost, prays the Holy Ghost to renew

[1] Venialia, in quæ frequentius labimur, quanquam recte et utiliter in confessione dicantur, taceri tamen citra culpam, multisque aliis remediis expiari possunt. Sess. xiv. cap. v.

[2] Peccata etiam ingentia dimittit. Ibid. Sess. xxii. cap. ii.

[3] In remissionem eorum quæ a nobis quotidie committuntur peccatorum. Ibid. s. xxii. cap. i.

[4] Liberemur a culpis quotidianis, et a peccatis mortalibus præservemur. Id. s. xiii. cap. ii.

[5] De Euch.

our spirits, *"Quia Ipse est remissio omnium peccatorum."*[1] Can it be doubted that the Holy Spirit taking possession of the loving soul by His sweet presence and love eliminates every contrary element therefrom? And all this is clearly founded on the teaching of the Angelic Doctor, treating the subject professedly and directly, saying exactly the same in the same words, and quoting the self-same passage from St. Ambrose; and further adding another exquisite reason, as follows:

*Res hujus Sacramenti est Caritas,*

"Non solum quantum ad habitum, sed etiam quantum ad actum, qui excitatur in hoc Sacramento, per quem peccata venialia solvuntur. Unde manifestum est quod virtute hujus Sacramenti remittuntur peccata venialia."[2]

And again:

"Major est virtus caritatis, cujus est hoc Sacramentum, quam venialium peccatorum. Nam caritas tollit per actum suum peccata venialia. Et eadem ratio est de hoc Sacramento."[3]

Moreover, the Holy Doctor teaches that the Holy Eucharist *secundum se* has the virtue

[1] Postcom. in Mis. Fer. iii. [2] III. Q. 79. Art. iv.
[3] Ibid. ad. 3.

of remitting every sin, *ex passione Christi, quæ est fons et causa remissionis peccatorum.* And that therefore if one were to receive Holy Communion in mortal sin, *cujus conscientiam et affectum non habet, devotè et reverenter accedens, consequetur per hoc Sacramentum gratiam caritatis, quæ contritionem perficiet, et remissionem peccati.*[1]

Let us observe the point of all this teaching:

*Res hujus Sacramenti est caritas;* that is, it all bespeaks the mutual love between Our Lord and the soul.

Our Lord gives Himself to the soul in His wondrous sacramental life, and the soul offers, opens, and gives itself to Him. It is this coming of Our Lord to the soul in the love of charity which is the *"res Sacramenti,"* implying the mutual love in act, and from act to habit strengthening and progressing; the love moving the soul to sorrow for past sin, and avoidance thereof in future. Thus the soul is purified through Our Lord's merits, and its good dispositions working under Him.

True conversion to God by the heart's love and preference, the pouring of one's soul be-

[1]St. Thom. Ibid. Art. iii.

fore the divine presence, in homage, affection, and contrition, the choice of God alone before all things, the lifting of mind and heart to Him by transcending created things, the sheltering of the soul beneath Our Lord's sacred merits in the Mass, the offering of the divine Victim in expiation of our sins, thus casting our miseries into the sea of God's mercies—by these and the like acts a soul is purified, justified, and accepted by the divine goodness, clemency, and love, without need of further anxiety, examen, and confession. And this because of the effluence of the divine presence within the soul, eliminating its sins and miseries, and uniting it in mutual love with God.

Thus Denis the Carthusian:

"As often as the soul turns itself with its whole heart to love God, resigning its own will, subjecting and conforming itself to the divine good-pleasure, and pouring itself forth to the majesty of God, so often it obtains the full remission of all its sins."[1]

And St. Teresa: "I am certain it leaves the soul pure and cleansed from all its faults."[2]

Blosius: "Truly, we have a more immediate remedy against lesser sins, when we turn to God by a sweet affection of love,

[1]De Prof. Monast. App. [2]Way of Perf., xvii.

than when we dwell upon the sins themselves."[1]

Hilton: "Whensoever thou risest against sin, set the point of thy thoughts on God. If thou do so, God fighteth for thee, and will destroy sin in thee."[2]

Surius: "Venial sins are far more easily, efficaciously, and perfectly effaced by a loving and fervent conversion and application to God than by looking at the sins themselves, even with contrition. This is a hidden exercise, known to a few, and little used."[3]

Moreover, the teaching of the Angelic Doctor is that love's power frees the soul not only from sin, but from the punishment due to it also: "God accepts rather the love of the heart than external acts. But by external acts a soul is freed both from sin and penalty. Therefore in like manner is it freed by the love of the heart. Thus, contrition rising from love may avail to free the soul both from guilt and punishment."[4]

Here we have at once

*Peace, Progress, Purification,*

for every well-willed soul in the way of spir-

[1]Spec. Mon. v. [2]Scale.
[3]Præf. to "Gold. exerc." of Esch.
[4]Supplem. ad. iii. P. Q. 5. A. 2.

itual perfection, and all grounded and founded on the science of the Church and the saints.

Moreover, in our own days the Holy Father, Pius X, has declared that He wills us all to go forward by frequent and daily communion, without the obligation of weekly confession. And why, indeed, should earnest and loving souls be habituated to so much needless examen and confession of venials, when they have no will for mortal sin, and when such effectual and plentiful means are supplied them daily and hourly of cancelling their faults, dispersing their fears, and purifying their souls? And all this by the ways of sweet love, peace, and joy, and through the acceptance of Our Lord's own merits in the sacrament of His love. "And He is the propitiation for our sins."[1]

Thus it is, as Hilton says, that

*God fighteth for thee,*
*and will destroy sin in thee.*

And thus it is, too, that we become

*loving and courageous souls;*

more and more under the governance of the

[1] 1 John ii. 2.

Holy Ghost, less and less playthings of the devil, and victims of inane imagination.

*"God is light: and in Him there is no darkness. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He also is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. And the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin."*[1]

[1] Ibid. i. 5-7.

## XVIII

### The Governance of the Holy Ghost

AS LONG as we live here below we have to deal with a twofold life within us. "Not that is first which is spiritual, but that which is natural: afterward that which is spiritual."[1] We are born to nature before we are born to grace, and thus the natural man quickly steals a march upon the spiritual man. The things of sense surround us, and we are soon "drawn away and allured."[2] Habits form by corresponding repetition of act, and while nature strengthens from use, grace remains weak from neglect.

"Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?"[3] By the life of grace we are in mutual love with God through charity: and "he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him."[4] Therefore the spirit of God is within us. "We have not received the spirit of this world, but the spirit that is of God, that we may know the things that are given

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 46.
[2] James i. 14.
[3] 1 Cor. iii. 16.
[4] 1 John iv. 16

us from God: which things also we speak, not in the learned words of human wisdom, but in the doctrine of the spirit. But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him, and he can not understand. For what man knoweth the things of a man but the spirit of a man that is in him? So the things that are of God no man knoweth, but the spirit of God."[1] "Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God; and you are not your own? For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body."[2] "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit."[3] "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us."[4] Thus the Holy Ghost and the divine charity are ever together within us, seeing that He is the increated love, abiding and working within the souls of men through the habit of created charity,[5] in order that He may move us freely and lovingly, by our own faculty of love, He and the soul ever in mutual love to-

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 11-14.
[2] Id. vi. 19.
[3] Id. 17.
[4] Rom. v. 5.
[5] *Oportet ponere caritatem esse habitum creatum in anima, quæ quidem manat ab amore qui est Spiritus Sanctus* (St. Thom. 1 Sen. D. 27 Q. 1. A. 1).

gether, and working in all promptly, easily, and sweetly, seeing that at once to nature and grace "nothing is sweeter than love."[1]

But alas! "the old man is still alive within us," as the "Imitation" says, and his long-standing, perverse, and habituated workings serve as constant impediments to the workings of the Holy Ghost in the life of divine charity.

What, then, is to be done, but to offer ourselves to be "all for God"? This will imply the "getting out of the habitation of nature," and the getting under the governance of the spirit of God. This means a change of life and principle. "My Son, thou must give all for all, and be nothing of thine own."[2] "Leave thyself, and thou shalt find Me."[3] It implies much forming and unforming. "Here below, to live is to change. And to be perfect is to have changed very often."[4] If we are to be the real thing, we must go to the root of the matter, which is the love of the heart. Do we really love and prefer God above all things? Love is the tendency of the will. Do we really *will* to be "all for Him"? Do we wish to have Him in our memory, by the habitual remembrance of the divine presence around, above, within us; to

[1]Imit. iii. 5. [2]Imit. iii. 27. [3]Ibid. 37. [4]Newman, Developm.

have Him constantly in the mind, by the knowledge of Himself and His wondrous works in nature, grace, and glory; to have Him in the heart, loving Him more and more, voluntarily choosing Him and preferring Him to all the pleasures of created things? And are we wishing and striving little by little to bring all the workings of our faculties, senses, and members into due subordination to the divine knowledge and love?

This is not, indeed, the work of nature, but of grace; not of natural love, but of spiritual love; not of the human spirit, but of the spirit of God. Therefore it is not to be accomplished by any activities of our own. It is "God who worketh in us both to will and to accomplish."[1] "Likewise, the spirit also helpeth our infirmity."[2] But we must be prepared to sacrifice and renounce the lower life for the sake of the higher, to leave the gratifications of nature, and yield ourselves to the governance of the Divine Spirit. Why should this be considered very difficult? We are all destined for it ultimately. Why not enjoy the benefit and merit of it here below? It is not a dead sacrifice, but a happy exchange. To attain it we must just become loving and courageous souls. We must give

[1] Philipp. ii. 13. [2] Rom. viii. 26.

up a little to obtain much. We must let go the dust to secure the gold. We must leave the human to get to the divine. We are not good merchants if we are not prepared for this. Are not the children of the world wiser in their business than we are in ours?

Is not our offering in religion that of the holocaust?[1] But this means we are to be "all for God."

Let us begin with an unreserved oblation of ourselves and the works of our life to God, remembering that our calling is that of mutual love and work with Him: for such is Christian, Religious, and spiritual life in different ways and degrees. Then in all God Himself is the principal worker, but we work with Him. This is why we should remember His divine presence and cultivate more and more His knowledge and love. After a time the habits of inward life grow and strengthen, nature is gradually subdued to grace, and the human spirit to the divine. And the more faithfully a soul yields itself to the divine promptings and workings, the more fully does the divine spirit engage it, and work within it, till it lives habitually under the governance of the spirit of God.

[1] Status religiosus est quoddam holocaustum, per quod aliquis totaliter se et sua offert Deo. St. Thom. 2. 2. Q. 186. A. 7.

*Qui Spiritu Dei aguntur, ii sunt filii Dei.*[1] *Qui adhæret Deo, unus Spiritus est.*[2]

Like all other habits, the inner contemplative habit between the soul and God is developed by its corresponding repetition of act. Therefore the more a soul attends to the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, receiving its movement from Him, and acting faithfully according to Him, the more does this divine Lord and Master gain possession of His kingdom within it, till it becomes His "homeliest home" on earth. But the counterpart of all this must be the renunciation of the natural man. For how can the soul be under two masters together? The soul of man is the kingdom of God—by creation, redemption, and possession. We must give it all to Him. Impediments to His reign must be removed. "Let all that is within me bless His Holy name,"[3] and let all our faculties, senses, and members little by little be subdued to Him, thus receiving from Him our life and every movement.

It is recorded of Dame Gertrude More that she was "wholly in the hands and under the guidance of the spirit of God; that she sought not comfort from without, which she did not need, and which she had no leave

[1]Rom. viii. 14. [2]1 Cor. vi. 17. [3]Ps. cii. 1.

from her inward Lord and Ruler to seek. In her the light and efficacy of the inner spirit was infinitely above anything that could be wrought by human words or works. Thus, when such a soul looks not for aid from without, it is a sign that her interior Lord has provided for her needs from within; and the soul herself and all others should be satisfied. She contented herself with the presence of God in her soul, and with the working of His light and grace therein. To have gone her own way without leave from her Love within would have hindered and confounded her interior happiness."[1]

"No soul is perfectly reformed but by immediate converse with God."[2]

How readily does the Spirit of God take the governance of every faithful and loving soul! Are not its faculties made for His sweet indwelling and moving power? But ordinarily His way of gaining His hold on a soul is but by very inward and gradual work, adapting Himself to the conditions of our poor, feeble nature, and gaining more and more sway within the powers through the strong principle of love, since even to nature herself "nothing is sweeter than love." Thus

[1]Life of D. Gert. More, by F. Baker, O.S.B. [2]Ibid.

it is that the good Spirit governs, *mediante habitu caritatis. Et quidquid recipitur, per modum recipientis recipitur.* So that while a soul is yet imperfect, many an impediment to His work will the Spirit find within. Yet He "helpeth our infirmity."[1] And as long as He sees the heart is right, His work within proceeds. *Qui salvos facit rectos corde.*[2] Only little by little do the old habits of nature yield to the higher requirements of grace, the good Spirit gradually and gently supplanting them by the habit of His own love. In this way the laws of nature are observed, and God and man work together. All moves freely and willingly from love; formerly, natural love, now divine love. And when the natural is subdued to the divine, then nature and grace go hand in hand together in the love and service of God. As the Psalmist says, *Ambularimus cum consensu.*[3] And thus the Spirit of God possesses and governs His own, overflowing in His gifts and fruits to the loving and faithful soul.

How delightful to be under the effluence of His divine *wisdom;* to see and judge of all things *ex altissima causa*[4] from God's own

[1] Spiritus adjuvat infirmitatem nostram. Rom. viii. 26.
[2] Ps. vii. 11. [3] Ps. liv. 15.
[4] Qui cognoscit causam altissimam quæ est Deus, dicitur sapiens simpliciter, inquantum per regulas divinas omnia potest judicare et ordinare. St. Thom. 2. 2. Q. 45. A. 1.

ineffable and infallible light. "God is light, and in Him there is no darkness."[1] By contact with the Spirit of God man knows the things that are of God, and thus judges and orders the works of life according to Him.[2] By the gift of *understanding* the good Spirit enables the soul to penetrate the truths of faith, the meaning of Holy Scripture, and the sense of spiritual books. By the gift of His *knowledge* He illuminates the mind with divine light in human things, showing us what we ought to believe, the views we ought to take, the course we ought to pursue, both in regard to our own souls and those of others. By His *counsel* He shows us how to use the right means in the particular circumstances in which we find ourselves: how to discern, decide, and move amidst the continually changing scenes and surroundings of daily life. His gift of *piety* maintains the soul in habitual affection toward God, giving us a delight in holy things, with a corresponding distaste for those profane and frivolous. For far too little for a soul that has found the Creator are the perishable gratifications

[1] 1 John i. 5.

[2] Ad sapientiam prius pertinet contemplatio divinorum, quæ est visio principii; et posterius dirigere actus humanos secundum rationes divinas. St. Thom. ibid. A. 3. ad. 3.

of creatures. *Animæ videnti Creatorem angusta est omnis creatura.*[1] His gift of *fortitude* strengthens and sustains the soul in the labours it undertakes and the sufferings it endures in the service of God. "Without this gift no notable progress can be made in spiritual life. Prayer and mortification, which are its principal exercises, demand a generous determination to overcome all the difficulties to be encountered in the way of the spirit, which is so opposed to our natural inclinations."[2] And the *fear of God* maintains the soul in habitual reverence and submission to Him. By this gift the soul has a profound regard to the overwhelming majesty of God above it, with a corresponding horror of sin, and of everything opposed to the divine will; desiring constantly in all things to render to God a faithful and loving service. Charity, joy, peace, patience, and all the other virtues follow as the fruits of the Spirit, and the effects of His divine governance in the soul. For "he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit."[3] And "how hath He not with Him given us all things."[4] Such as these attain to a happy equality in the midst of the inequalities of life. They find

[1] St. Greg. Dialog. ii. 35.
[2] Lallemant. Sp. Doctr., vol. ii, c. iii, sec. 13.
[3] 1 Cor. vi. 17. [4] Rom. viii. 32.

the divine presence and love in all around them. They have come to the Fountain of living Water, which "makes glad the city of God" within them:[1] and their souls are cleansed and delighted in the profusion of its heavenly streams, which flow around them as a ceaseless torrent, in all the beauties of nature and grace. Before these living waters faults and fears all give way. "If we drink them but once," says St. Teresa, "I am certain they leave the soul pure, and cleansed from all her faults.[2] And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and he that thirsteth, let him come: and he that will, let him take the water of life freely."[3]

[1]Ps. xlv. 4. [2]Way of Perf., c. xix. [3]Apoc. xxii. 17.

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